Brida Justard.

Gouda. Christmas. 1948.

from Freddie.

THE

COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

MACMILLAN AND CO., Limited
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TORONTO

THE

COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

JOHN MORLEY

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1785	1850	Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead, anno ætatis 14 And has the Sun his flaming chariot driven.	1
1786	1815	Extract from the Conclusion of a Poem composed in anticipation of leaving School Dear native regions, I foretell.	2
1786 (probably)	1807	Written in very Early Youth Calm is all nature as a resting wheel.	3
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[1] In every instance of a Poem published during Wordsworth's lifetime the title is that which he adopted in his final edition. The first line of the Poem follows in smaller print. When no title was given—as in the case of many of the Sonnets, etc.—the first line alone is printed.

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1802 August	1807	On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee.	179
1802 August		The King of Sweden The Voice of song from distant lands shall call.	180
1802 August	1807	To Toussaint L'Ouverture Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!	180
1802 Aug. 29	1807	Composed in the Valley near Dover, on the day of landing Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more.	180
1802 Sept. 1	1807	September 1, 1802 We had a female Passenger who came.	180
1802 Sept.	1807	Near Dover, September 1802 Inland within a hollow vale, I stood.	181
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1803 October	1807	There is a bondage worse, far worse, to bear	200
1803 October	1807	October 1803 These times strike monied worldlings with dismay.	200
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1811 1842 Upon perusing the foregoing Epistle thirty years after its Composition . . . 403
Soon did the Almighty Giver of all rest.

1811 1815 Upon the sight of a Beautiful Picture, painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart. . . . 404
Praised be the Art whose subtle power could stay.

Composed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1808	1815	In the Grounds of Coleorton, the Seat of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., Leicestershire The embowering rose, the acacia, and the pine.	404
1811	1815	In a Garden of the Same Oft is the medal faithful to its trust.	404
1808	1815	Written at the Request of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., and in his Name, for an Urn, placed by him at the Termination of a newly-planted Avenue in the same Grounds Ye Lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed Urn.	405
1811	1815	For a Seat in the Groves of Coleorton Beneath yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound.	405

1812

1812	1820	Song for the Spinning-Wheel. Founded upon a Belief prevalent among the Pastoral Vales of Westmoreland Swiftly turn the murmuring wheel!	406
1812	1815	Composed on the eve of the Marriage of a Friend in the Vale of Grasmere What need of clamorous bells, or ribands gay.	406
1812	1827	Water-Fowl Mark how the feathered tenants of the flood.	406

1813

1813	1815	View from the top of Black Comb This Height a ministering Angel might select.	407
1813	1835	Written with a Slate Pencil on a Stone, on the Side of the Mountain of Black Comb Stay, bold Adventurer; rest awhile thy limbs.	407
1813 Nov.	1815	November 1813 Now that all hearts are glad, all faces bright.	408

1814

1795- 1814	1814	The Excursion 'Twas Summer, and the sun had mounted high.	408
1814	1815	Laodamia "With sacrifice before the rising morn.	530
1814	1820	Dion (see Plutarch) Serene, and fitted to embrace.	532

Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1814—

1814	1820	1. Suggested by a beautiful ruin upon one of the Islands of Loch Lomond, a place chosen for the retreat of a solitary individual, from whom this habitation acquired the name of The Brownie's Cell To barren heath, bleak moor, and quaking fen.	534

Composed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
		[Memorials of a Tour in Scotland—*continued.*]	
1814	1820	2. Composed at Cora Linn, in sight of Wallace's Tower Lord of the vale! astounding Flood.	536
1814	1827	3. Effusion in the Pleasure-ground on the banks of the Bran, near Dunkeld What He—who, 'mid the kindred throng.	536
1814	1820	4. Yarrow Visited, September 1814 And is this—Yarrow? *This* the Stream.	538
1814	1815	From the dark chambers of dejection freed	539
1814 Nov. 13	1815	Lines written on a Blank Leaf in a Copy of the Author's Poem, "The Excursion," upon hearing of the Death of the late Vicar of Kendal To public notice, with reluctance strong.	539

1815

1815 March	1816	To B. R. Haydon High is our calling, Friend!—Creative Art.	540
1815	1820	Artegal and Elidure Where be the temples which, in Britain's Isle.	540
1815 Sept.	1816	September 1815 While not a leaf seems faded; while the fields.	543
1815 Nov. 1	1816	November 1 How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright.	544
		[*The following Sonnets were originally published in the edition of* 1815. *It is impossible to determine the precise year of composition, but they fall within the years* 1810-15.]	
	1815	The fairest, brightest, hues of ether fade	544
	1815	"Weak is the will of Man, his judgment blind	544
	1815	Hail, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!	544
	1815	The Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said	545
	1815	Even as a dragon's eye that feels the stress	545
	1815	Mark the concentred hazels that enclose	545
	1815	To the Poet, John Dyer Bard of the Fleece, whose skilful genius made.	546
	1815	Brook! whose society the Poet seeks	546
	1815	Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind	546

1816

1816 Jan. 18	1816	Ode.—The Morning of the Day appointed for a General Thanksgiving, January 18, 1816 Hail, orient Conqueror of gloomy Night!	546
1816	1816	Ode Imagination—ne'er before content.	549

Composed.	First Published.		PAGE
1816 Feb.	1816	Invocation to the Earth, February 1816 "Rest, rest, perturbèd Earth!	551
1816 Jan.	1816	Ode composed in January 1816 When the soft hand of sleep had closed the latch.	552
1816	1816	Ode Who rises on the banks of Seine.	554
1816 Feb.	1816	The French Army in Russia, 1812-13 Humanity, delighting to behold.	555
1816 Feb.	1816	On the same occasion Ye Storms, resound the praises of your King!	555
1816	1832	By Moscow self-devoted to a blaze	555
1816	1827	The Germans on the Heights of Hochheim Abruptly paused the strife;—the field throughout.	556
1816 Feb.	1816	Siege of Vienna raised by John Sobieski Oh, for a kindling touch from that pure flame.	556
1816 Feb.	1816	Occasioned by the Battle of Waterloo, February 1816 Intrepid sons of Albion! not by you.	556
1816 Feb	1816	Occasioned by the same battle The Bard—whose soul is meek as dawning day.	556
1816 Feb.	1827	Emperors and Kings, how oft have temples rung	557
1816	1816	Feelings of a French Royalist, on the Disinterment of the Remains of the Duke d'Enghien Dear Reliques! from a pit of vilest mould.	557
1816	1832	Translation of part of the First Book of the Æneid But Cytherea, studious to invent.	557
1816	1820	A Fact, and an Imagination; or, Canute and Alfred, on the Seashore The Danish Conqueror, on his royal chair.	559
1816	1820	To Dora *"A little onward lend thy guiding hand.*	560
1816	1820	To ———, on her First Ascent to the Summit of Helvellyn Inmate of a mountain dwelling.	561

1817

Composed.	First Published.		PAGE
1817	1820	Vernal Ode Beneath the concave of an April sky.	562
1817 May	1820	Ode to Lycoris. May 1817 An age hath been when Earth was proud.	563
1817	1820	To the Same Enough of climbing toil!—Ambition treads.	564
1817	1820	The Longest Day. Addressed to my Daughter Let us quit the leafy arbour.	565

Composed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1817	1820	Hint from the Mountains for certain Political Pretenders "Who but hails the sight with pleasure.	566
1817	1820	The Pass of Kirkstone Within the mind strong fancies work.	567
1817	1827	Lament of Mary Queen of Scots, on the Eve of a New Year Smile of the Moon!—for so I name.	568
1817	1827	Sequel to the "Beggars," 1802. Composed many years after Where are they now, those wanton Boys?	569

1818

1818	1820	The Pilgrim's Dream; or, The Star and the Glow-worm A Pilgrim, when the summer day.	569
1818	1820	Inscriptions supposed to be found in and near a Hermit's Cell 1. Hopes what are they?—Beads of morning.	570
		Inscribed upon a Rock 2. Pause, Traveller! whosoe'er thou be. 3. Hast thou seen, with flash incessant.	571
		Near the Spring of the Hermitage 4. Troubled long with warring notions. 5. Not seldom, clad in radiant vest.	571
1818	1820	Composed upon an Evening of extraordinary Splendour and Beauty Had this effulgence disappeared.	572

1819

1819 Feb.	1819	Composed during a Storm One who was suffering tumult in his soul.	573
1819	1819	This, and the two following, were suggested by Mr. W. Westall's views of the Caves, etc., in Yorkshire Pure element of waters! wheresoe'er.	573
1819	1819	Malham Cove Was the aim frustrated by force or guile.	573
1819	1819	Gordale At early dawn, or rather when the air.	574
1819	1819	Aerial Rock—whose solitary brow	574
1819	1819	The Wild Duck's Nest The Imperial Consort of the Fairy-king.	574
1819	1819	Written upon a Blank Leaf in "The Complete Angler" While flowing rivers yield a blameless sport	574
1819	1819	Captivity—Mary Queen of Scots "As the cold aspect of a sunless way.	575

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1819	1819	To a Snowdrop	575
		Lone Flower, hemmed in with snows and white as they.	
1819	1820	On seeing a tuft of Snowdrops in a Storm	575
		When haughty expectations prostrate lie	
1819	1819	Composed in one of the Valleys of Westmoreland, on Easter Sunday	575
		With each recurrence of this glorious morn.	
1819	1819	Grief, thou hast lost an ever-ready friend	575
1819	1819	I watch, and long have watched, with calm regret	576
1819	1819	I heard (alas! 'twas only in a dream)	576
1819	1820	The Haunted Tree. To ——	576
		Those silver clouds collected round the sun	
1819	1820	September 1819	577
		The sylvan slopes with corn-clad fields.	
1819	1820	Upon the same Occasion	577
		Departing summer hath assumed.	

1820

1820	1820	There is a little unpretending Rill	578
1820	1820	Composed on the Banks of a Rocky Stream	578
		Dogmatic Teachers, of the snow-white fur!	
1820	1820	On the death of His Majesty (George the Third)	579
		Ward of the Law!—dread Shadow of a King.	
1820	1820	The stars are mansions built by Nature's hand	579
1820	1820	To the Lady Mary Lowther	579
		Lady! I rifled a Parnassian Cave.	
1820	1820	On the Detraction which followed the Publication of a certain Poem	579
		A Book came forth of late, called Peter Bell.	
1820 May.	1820	Oxford, May 30, 1820	580
		Ye sacred Nurseries of blooming Youth!	
1820	1820	Oxford, May 30, 1820	580
		Shame on this faithless heart! that could allow.	
1820	1820	June 1820	580
		Fame tells of groves—from England far away.	
1820	1822	Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820—	
		Dedication (sent with these Poems in MS. to ——).	581
		Dear Fellow-travellers! think not that the Muse.	
		1. Fish-women—On Landing at Calais	581
		'Tis said, fantastic ocean doth enfold.	
		2. Brugès	581
		Brugès I saw attired with golden light.	

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1820	1822	[Memorials of a Tour on the Continent—*continued.*]	
		3. Brugès The Spirit of Antiquity—enshrined.	581
		4. After visiting the Field of Waterloo A wingèd Goddess—clothed in vesture wrought.	581
		5. Between Namur and Liege What lovelier home could gentle Fancy choose?	582
		6. Aix-la-Chapelle Was it to disenchant, and to undo.	582
		7. In the Cathedral at Cologne O for the help of Angels to complete.	582
		8. In a Carriage, upon the Banks of the Rhine Amid this dance of objects sadness steals.	583
		9. Hymn for the Boatmen, as they approach the Rapids under the Castle of Heidelberg Jesu! bless our slender Boat.	583
		10. The Source of the Danube Not, like his great Compeers, indignantly.	583
		11. On approaching the Staub-bach, Lauterbrunnen Uttered by whom, or how inspired—designed.	584
		12. The Fall of the Aar—Handec From the fierce aspect of this River, throwing.	584
		13. Memorial, near the Outlet of the Lake of Thun Around a wild and woody hill.	584
		14. Composed in one of the Catholic Cantons Doomed as we are our native dust.	584
		15. After-thought O Life! without thy chequered scene.	585
		16. Scene on the Lake of Brientz "What know we of the Blest above.	585
		17. Engelberg, the Hill of Angels For gentlest uses, oft-times Nature takes.	585
		18. Our Lady of the Snow Meek Virgin Mother, more benign.	585
		19. Effusion in Presence of the Painted Tower of Tell at Altorf What though the Italian pencil wrought not here.	586
		20. The Tower of Schwytz By antique Fancy trimmed—though lowly, bred.	586
		21. On hearing the "Ranz des Vaches" on the Top of the Pass of St. Gothard I listen—but no faculty of mine.	587
		22. Fort Fuentes Dread hour! when, upheaved by war's sulphurous blast.	587
		23. The Church of San Salvador, seen from the Lake of Lugano Thou sacred Pile! whose turrets rise.	588

Composed. *First Published.* PAGE

1820 1822 [Memorials of a Tour on the Continent—*continued.*]

24. The Italian Itinerant, and the Swiss Goatherd—Part I. . 588
Now that the farewell tear is dried.
Part II. 589
With nodding plumes, and lightly drest.

25. The Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci, in the Refectory of the Convent of Maria della Grazia—Milan . . 589
Tho' searching damps and many an envious flaw.

26. The Eclipse of the Sun, 1820 590
High on her speculative tower.

27. The Three Cottage Girls 591
How blest the Maid whose heart—yet free.

28. The Column intended by Buonaparte for a Triumphal Edifice in Milan, now lying by the wayside in the Simplon Pass 591
Ambition—following down this far-famed slope.

29. Stanzas composed in the Simplon Pass 592
Vallombrosa ! I longed in thy shadiest wood

30. Echo, upon the Gemmi 592
What beast of chase hath broken from the cover?

31. Processions. Suggested on a Sabbath Morning in the Vale of Chamouny 593
To appease the Gods ; or public thanks to yield.

32. Elegiac Stanzas 594
Lulled by the sound of pastoral bells.

33. Sky-Prospect—From the Plain of France 595
Lo ! in the burning west, the craggy nape.

34. On being Stranded near the Harbour of Boulogne . . 595
Why cast ye back upon the Gallic shore.

35. After landing—the Valley of Dover, November 1820 . 595
Where be the noisy followers of the game.

36. At Dover 596
From the Pier's head, musing, and with increase.

37. Desultory Stanzas, upon receiving the preceding Sheets from the Press 596
Is then the final page before me spread.

1820 1820 The River Duddon. A Series of Sonnets 597
To the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth (with the Sonnets to the River Duddon, and other poems in this collection, 1820) . 598
The Minstrels played their Christmas tune.

1. Not envying Latian shades—if yet they throw 599
2. Child of the clouds ! remote from every taint 599
3. How shall I paint thee ?—Be this naked stone 600
4. Take, cradled Nursling of the mountain, take 600
5. Sole listener, Duddon ! to the breeze that played . . . 600

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1820	1820	[Duddon Sonnets—*continued.*]	
		6. Flowers	600
		Ere yet our course was graced with social trees.	
		7. "Change me, some God, into that breathing rose!"	600
		8. What aspect bore the Man who roved or fled	601
		9. The Stepping-stones	601
		The struggling Rill insensibly is grown.	
		10. The same Subject	601
		Not so that Pair whose youthful spirits dance.	
		11. The Faëry Chasm	601
		No fiction was it of the antique age.	
		12. Hints for the Fancy	602
		On, loitering Muse—the swift Stream chides us—on!	
		13. Open Prospect	602
		Hail to the fields—with Dwellings sprinkled o'er.	
1806	1807	14. O mountain Stream! the Shepherd and his Cot	602
		15. From this deep chasm, where quivering sunbeams play	602
		16. American Tradition	602
		Such fruitless questions may not long beguile.	
		17. Return	603
		A dark plume fetch me from yon blasted yew.	
		18. Seathwaite Chapel	603
		Sacred Religion! "mother of form and fear."	
		19. Tributary Stream	603
		My frame hath often trembled with delight.	
		20. The Plain of Donnerdale	603
		The old inventive Poets, had they seen.	
		21. Whence that low voice?—A whisper from the heart	604
		22. Tradition	604
		A love-lorn Maid, at some far-distant time.	
		23. Sheep-washing	604
		Sad thoughts, avaunt!—partake we their blithe cheer	
		24. The Resting-place	604
		Mid-noon is past;—upon the sultry mead.	
		25. Methinks 'twere no unprecedented feat	604
		26. Return, Content! for fondly I pursued	605
		27. Fallen, and diffused into a shapeless heap	605
		28. Journey renewed	605
		I rose while yet the cattle, heat-opprest.	
		29. No record tells of lance opposed to lance	605
		30. Who swerves from innocence, who makes divorce	606
		31. The Kirk of Ulpha to the pilgrim's eye	606
		32. Not hurled precipitous from steep to steep	606

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1820	1820	[Duddon Sonnets—*continued.*]	
		33. Conclusion But here no cannon thunders to the gale.	606
		34. After-thought *I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide.*	607
1820	1822	A Parsonage in Oxfordshire Where holy ground begins, unhallowed ends.	607
1820	1822	To Enterprise Keep for the Young the impassioned smile.	607

1821

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1821	1822	Ecclesiastical Sonnets. In Series—	
		PART I.—From the Introduction of Christianity into Britain to the Consummation of the Papal Dominion—	
		1. Introduction I, who accompanied with faithful pace.	609
		2. Conjectures If there be prophets on whose spirits rest.	610
		3. Trepidation of the Druids Screams round the Arch-druid's brow the sea-mew—white.	610
		4. Druidical Excommunication Mercy and Love have met thee on thy road.	610
		5. Uncertainty Darkness surrounds us; seeking, we are lost.	610
		6. Persecution Lament! for Diocletian's fiery sword.	611
		7. Recovery As, when a storm hath ceased, the birds regain.	611
		8. Temptations from Roman Refinements Watch, and be firm! for, soul-subduing vice.	611
		9. Dissensions That heresies should strike (if truth be scanned.	611
		10. Struggle of the Britons against the Barbarians Rise!—they *have* risen: of brave Aneurin ask.	612
		11. Saxon Conquest Nor wants the cause the panic-striking aid.	612
		12. Monastery of Old Bangor *The oppression of the tumult—wrath and scorn.*	612
		13. Casual Incitement A bright-haired company of youthful slaves.	612
		14. Glad Tidings For ever hallowed be this morning fair.	613
		15. Paulinus But, to remote Northumbria's royal Hall.	613

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1821	1822	[Ecclesiastical Sonnets—*continued.*]	
		16. Persuasion "Man's life is like a Sparrow, mighty King!	613
		17. Conversion Prompt transformation works the novel Lore.	613
		18. Apology Nor scorn the aid which Fancy oft doth lend.	614
		19. Primitive Saxon Clergy How beautiful your presence, how benign.	614
		20. Other Influences Ah, when the Body, round which in love we clung.	614
		21. Seclusion Lance, shield, and sword relinquished, at his side.	614
		22. Continued Methinks that to some vacant hermitage.	614
		23. Reproof But what if One, through grove or flowery mead.	615
		24. Saxon Monasteries, and Lights and Shades of the Religion By such examples moved to unbought pains.	615
		25. Missions and Travels Not sedentary all: there are who roam.	615
		26. Alfred Behold a pupil of the monkish gown.	615
		27. His Descendants When thy great soul was freed from mortal chains.	616
		28. Influence Abused Urged by Ambition, who with subtlest skill.	616
		29. Danish Conquests Woe to the Crown that doth the Cowl obey.	616
		30. Canute A pleasant music floats along the Mere.	616
		31. The Norman Conquest The woman-hearted Confessor prepares.	617
	1836	32. Coldly we spake. The Saxons, overpowered	617
		33. The Council of Clermont "And shall," the Pontiff asks, "profaneness flow.	617
		34. Crusades The turbaned Race are poured in thickening swarms.	617
		35. Richard I. Redoubted King, of courage leonine.	618
		36. An Interdict Realms quake by turns: proud Arbitress of grace.	618
		37. Papal Abuses As with the Stream our voyage we pursue.	618

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1821	1822	[Ecclesiastical Sonnets—*continued.*]	
		38. Scene in Venice Black Demons hovering o'er his mitred head.	618
		39. Papal Dominion Unless to Peter's Chair the viewless wind.	618

Part II.—To the close of the Troubles in the Reign of Charles I.

Composed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
	1845	1. How soon—alas! did Man, created pure—	619
	1845	2. From false assumption rose, and, fondly hailed	619
		3. Cistertian Monastery "*Here Man more purely lives, less oft doth fall.*	619
	1835	4. Deplorable his lot who tills the ground	619
		5. Monks and Schoolmen Record we too, with just and faithful pen.	620
		6. Other Benefits And, not in vain embodied to the sight.	620
		7. Continued And what melodious sounds at times prevail.	620
		8. Crusaders Furl we the sails, and pass with tardy oars.	620
	1845	9. As faith thus sanctified the warrior's crest	620
	1845	10. Where long and deeply hath been fixed the root	621
		11. Transubstantiation Enough! for see, with dim association.	621
	1835	12. The Vaudois But whence came they who for the Saviour Lord.	621
	1835	13. Praised be the Rivers, from their mountain springs	621
		14. Waldenses Those had given earliest notice, as the lark.	622
		15. Archbishop Chichely to Henry V. "What beast in wilderness or cultured field.	622
		16. Wars of York and Lancaster Thus is the storm abated by the craft.	622
		17. Wicliffe Once more the Church is seized with sudden fear.	622
		18. Corruptions of the higher Clergy "Woe to you, Prelates! rioting in ease.	622
		19. Abuse of Monastic Power And what is Penance with her knotted thong.	623
		20. Monastic Voluptuousness Yet more,—round many a Convent's blazing fire.	623
		21. Dissolution of the Monasteries Threats come which no submission may assuage.	623
		22. The same Subject The lovely Nun (submissive, but more meek.	623

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1821	1822	[Ecclesiastical Sonnets—*continued.*]	
		23. Continued Yet many a Novice of the cloistral shade.	624
		24. Saints Ye, too, must fly before a chasing hand.	624
		25. The Virgin Mother! whose virgin bosom was uncrost.	624
		26. Apology Not utterly unworthy to endure.	624
		27. Imaginative Regrets Deep is the lamentation! Not alone.	625
		28. Reflections Grant, that by this unsparing hurricane.	625
		29. Translation of the Bible But, to outweigh all harm, the sacred Book.	625
	1827	30. The Point at Issue For what contend the wise?—for nothing less.	625
		31. Edward VI. "Sweet is the holiness of Youth"—so felt.	625
		32. Edward signing the Warrant for the Execution of Joan of Kent The tears of man in various measure gush.	626
	1827	33. Revival of Popery The saintly Youth has ceased to rule, discrowned.	626
	1827	34. Latimer and Ridley How fast the Marian death-list is unrolled!	626
		35. Cranmer Outstretching flameward his upbraided hand.	626
		36. General View of the Troubles of the Reformation Aid, glorious Martyrs, from your fields of light.	627
		37. English Reformers in Exile Scattering, like birds escaped the fowler's net.	627
		38. Elizabeth Hail, Virgin Queen! o'er many an envious bar.	627
	1822	39. Eminent Reformers Methinks that I could trip o'er heaviest soil.	627
		40. The Same Holy and heavenly Spirits as they are.	628
		41. Distractions Men, who have ceased to reverence, soon defy.	628
		42. Gunpowder Plot Fear hath a hundred eyes that all agree.	628
		43. Illustration. The Jung-Frau and the Fall of the Rhine near Schaffhausen The Virgin Mountain, wearing like a Queen.	628

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1821	1822	[Ecclesiastical Sonnets—*continued.*]	
		44. Troubles of Charles the First Even such the contrast that, where'er we move.	628
		45. Laud Prejudged by foes determined not to spare.	629
		46. Afflictions of England Harp! could'st thou venture, on thy boldest string.	629
		PART III.—From the Restoration to the Present Times—	
		1. I saw the figure of a lovely Maid	629
		2. Patriotic Sympathies Last night, without a voice, that Vision spake.	630
		3. Charles the Second Who comes—with rapture greeted, and caressed.	630
		4. Latitudinarianism Yet Truth is keenly sought for, and the wind.	630
		5. Walton's Book of Lives There are no colours in the fairest sky.	630
		6. Clerical Integrity Nor shall the eternal roll of praise reject.	630
	1827	7. Persecution of the Scottish Covenanters When Alpine Vales threw forth a suppliant cry.	631
		8. Acquittal of the Bishops A voice, from long-expecting thousands sent.	631
		9. William the Third Calm as an under-current, strong to draw.	631
		10. Obligations of Civil to Religious Liberty Ungrateful Country, if thou e'er forget.	631
	1827	11. Sacheverel A sudden conflict rises from the swell.	632
		12. Down a swift Stream, thus far, a bold design	632
		Aspects of Christianity in America—	
Added in 1842	1845	13. I. The Pilgrim Fathers Well worthy to be magnified are they.	632
Added in 1842	1845	14. II. Continued From Rite and Ordinance abused they fled.	632
Added in 1842	1845	15. III. Concluded.—American Episcopacy Patriots informed with Apostolic light.	633
	1845	16. Bishops and Priests, blessèd are ye, if deep	633
		17. Places of Worship As star that shines dependent upon star.	633
		18. Pastoral Character A genial hearth, a hospitable board.	633

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1821	1822	[Ecclesiastical Sonnets—*continued.*]	
		19. The Liturgy Yes, if the intensities of hope and fear.	634
		20. Baptism Dear be the Church, that, watching o'er the needs.	634
		21. Sponsors Father !—to God himself we cannot give.	634
		22. Catechising From Little down to Least, in due degree.	634
		23. Confirmation The Young-ones gathered in from hill and dale.	634
		24. Confirmation continued I saw a Mother's eye intensely bent.	635
	1827	25. Sacrament By chain yet stronger must the Soul be tied.	635
	1845	26. The Marriage Ceremony The Vested Priest before the Altar stands.	635
	1845	27. Thanksgiving after Childbirth Woman ! the Power who left his throne on high.	635
	1845	28. Visitation of the Sick The Sabbath bells renew the inviting peal.	636
	1845	29. The Commination Service Shun not this Rite, neglected, yea abhorred.	636
	1845	30. Forms of Prayer at Sea To kneeling Worshippers no earthly floor.	636
	1845	31. Funeral Service From the Baptismal hour, thro' weal and woe.	636
		32. Rural Ceremony Closing the sacred Book which long has fed.	637
	1822	33. Regrets Would that our scrupulous Sires had dared to leave.	637
		34. Mutability From low to high doth dissolution climb.	637
		35. Old Abbeys Monastic Domes ! following my downward way.	637
	1827	36. Emigrant French Clergy Even while I speak, the sacred roofs of France.	637
		37. Congratulation Thus all things lead to Charity secured.	638
		38. New Churches But liberty, and triumphs on the Main.	638
		39. Church to be Erected Be this the chosen site ; the virgin sod.	638
		40. Continued Mine ear has rung, my spirit sunk subdued.	638

Composed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1821	1822	[Ecclesiastical Sonnets—*continued.*]	
		41. New Churchyard The encircling ground, in native turf arrayed.	639
		42. Cathedrals, etc. Open your gates, ye everlasting Piles!	639
		43. Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense.	639
		44. The Same What awful perspective! while from our sight.	639
		45. Continued They dreamt not of a perishable home.	640
		46. Ejaculation Glory to God! and to the Power who came.	640
		47. Conclusion Why sleeps the future, as a snake enrolled.	640

1823

1823	1827	Memory A pen—to register; a key.	640
1823	1827	To the Lady Fleming, on seeing the Foundation preparing for the Erection of Rydal Chapel, Westmoreland Blest is this Isle—our native Land.	641
1823	1827	On the same Occasion When in the antique age of bow and spear.	642
1823	1827	A volant Tribe of Bards on earth are found	643
1823	1827	Not Love, not War, nor the tumultuous swell	643

1824

1824	1827	To —— Let other bards of angels sing.	643
1824	1827	To —— O dearer far than light and life are dear.	643
1824	1827	How rich that forehead's calm expanse!	644
1824	1827	To —— Look at the fate of summer flowers.	644
1824	1827	A Flower Garden at Coleorton Hall, Leicestershire Tell me ye Zephyrs! that unfold.	644
1824 Sept.	1827	To the Lady E. B. and the Hon. Miss P. Composed in the Grounds of Plass Newidd, near Llangollen, 1824 A Stream, to mingle with your favourite Dee.	645
1824	1827	To the Torrent at the Devil's Bridge, North Wales, 1824 How art thou named? In search of what strange land.	646
1824	1827	Composed among the Ruins of a Castle in North Wales Through shattered galleries, 'mid roofless halls.	646

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1824	1827	Elegiac Stanzas. Addressed to Sir G. H. B., upon the death of his sister-in-law, 1824 O for a dirge! But why complain?	646
1824	1842	Cenotaph By vain affections unenthralled.	647
1824	1842	Epitaph in the Chapel-yard of Langdale, Westmoreland By playful smiles, (alas! too oft.	647

1825

1825	1827	The Contrast. The Parrot and the Wren Within her gilded cage confined.	648
1825	1827	To a Sky-lark Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky.	648

1826

1826	1827	Ere with cold beads of midnight dew	649
1826	1835	Ode, composed on May Morning While from the purpling east departs.	649
1826-34	1835	To May Though many suns have risen and set.	650
1826	1827	Once I could hail (howe'er serene the sky)	651
1826	1835	The massy Ways, carried across these heights	651
1826	1827	The Pillar of Trajan Where towers are crushed, and unforbidden weeds.	652

1827

1827	1827	On seeing a Needlecase in the Form of a Harp. The work of E. M. S. Frowns are on every Muse's face.	653
1827	1827	Dedication. To —— Happy the feeling from the bosom thrown.	654
1827	1827	Her only pilot the soft breeze, the boat	654
1827	1827	"Why, Minstrel, these untuneful murmurings—	654
1827	1827	To S. H. Excuse is needless when with love sincere.	654
1827	1827	Decay of Piety Oft have I seen, ere Time had ploughed my cheek.	655
1827	1827	Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned	655
1827	1827	Fair Prime of life! were it enough to gild	655
1827	1827	Retirement If the whole weight of what we think and feel.	655

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1827	1827	*There is a pleasure in poetic pains*	656
1827	1827	Recollection of the Portrait of King Henry Eighth, Trinity Lodge, Cambridge The imperial Stature, the colossal stride.	656
1827	1827	When Philoctetes in the Lemnian isle	656
1827	1827	While Anna's peers and early playmates tread	656
1827	1827	To the Cuckoo Not the whole warbling grove in concert heard.	656
1827	1827	The Infant M—— M—— Unquiet Childhood here by special grace.	657
1827	1827	To Rotha Q—— Rotha, my Spiritual Child! this head was grey.	657
1827	1827	To ——, in her seventieth year Such age how beautiful! O Lady bright.	657
1827	1827	In my mind's eye a Temple, like a cloud	657
1827	1827	Go back to antique ages, if thine eyes	658
1827	1827	In the Woods of Rydal Wild Redbreast! hadst thou at Jemima's lip.	658
1827	1827	Conclusion, To —— If these brief Records, by the Muses' Art.	658

1828

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1828	1832	A Morning Exercise Fancy, who leads the pastimes of the glad.	658
1828	1829	The Triad [*in* "*The Keepsake,*" 1829, *and in* 1832 *in the Poems*] Show me the noblest Youth of present time.	659
1828	1829	The Wishing-gate [*in* "*The Keepsake,*" 1829, *and in* 1832 *in the Poems*] Hope rules a land for ever green.	662
1828	1842	The Wishing-gate destroyed 'Tis gone—with old belief and dream.	663
1828	1835	A Jewish Family (in a small valley opposite St. Goar, upon the Rhine) Genius of Raphael! if thy wings.	663
1828	1829	The Gleaner, suggested by a picture [*in* "*The Keepsake,*" 1829; *under the title of* "*The Country Girl*" *published in* 1832 *in the Poems*] That happy gleam of vernal eyes.	664
1828 Dec.	1835	On the Power of Sound Thy functions are ethereal.	665
1828	1835	Incident at Bruges In Bruges town is many a street.	668

1829

Composed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1829	1835	Gold and Silver Fishes in a Vase The soaring lark is blest as proud.	668
1829	1835	Liberty (sequel to the above) Those breathing Tokens of your kind regard.	669
1829	1835	Humanity What though the Accused, upon his own appeal.	671
1829	1835	This Lawn, a carpet all alive	673
1829	1835	Thought on the Seasons Flattered with promise of escape.	673
1829	1829	A Gravestone upon the Floor in the Cloisters of Worcester Cathedral [*in "The Keepsake,"* 1829, *and in* 1832 *in the Poems*] "*Miserrimus!*" and neither name nor date.	674
1829	1829	A Tradition of Oker Hill in Darley Dale, Derbyshire [*in "The Keepsake,"* 1829, *and in* 1832 *in the Poems*] 'Tis said that to the brow of yon fair hill.	674

1830

1830	1835	The Armenian Lady's Love You have heard "a Spanish Lady.	674
1830	1835	The Russian Fugitive Enough of rose-bud lips, and eyes.	677
1830	1835	The Egyptian Maid; or, The Romance of the Water Lily While Merlin paced the Cornish sands.	681
1830	1835	The Poet and the Caged Turtledove As often as I murmur here.	687
1830	1835	Presentiments Presentiments! they judge not right.	687
1830	1835	In these fair vales hath many a Tree	688
1830 Nov.	1835	Elegiac Musings in the grounds of Coleorton Hall, the seat of the late Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart. With copious eulogy in prose or rhyme.	688
1830 Nov.	1835	Chatsworth! thy stately mansion, and the pride	689
1830	1835	To the Author's Portrait Go, faithful Portrait! and where long hath knelt.	690

1831

1831	1835	The Primrose of the Rock A Rock there is whose homely front.	690
1831	1835	Yarrow Revisited, and other Poems, composed (two excepted) during a Tour in Scotland, and on the English Border, in the Autumn of 1831. [*The "two excepted" are, probably, Nos.* 16 *and* 26]	691

Composed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1831	1835	[Yarrow Revisited—*continued.*]	
		1. Yarrow Revisited . . . . The gallant Youth, who may have gained.	692
		2. On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford, for Naples . . . . A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain.	693
		3. A Place of Burial in the South of Scotland . . . Part fenced by man, part by a rugged steep.	693
		4. On the Sight of a Manse in the South of Scotland . . Say, ye far-travelled clouds, far-seeing hills.	694
		5. Composed in Roslin Chapel during a Storm . . . The wind is now thy organist ;—a clank.	694
		6. The Trosachs . . . . There's not a nook within this solemn Pass.	695
		7. The pibroch's note, discountenanced or mute	695
		8. Composed in the Glen of Loch Etive . . . . "This Land of Rainbows spanning glens whose walls.	695
		9. Eagles. Composed at Dunollie Castle in the Bay of Oban Dishonoured Rock and Ruin! that, by law.	695
		10. In the Sound of Mull . . . . Tradition, be thou mute! Oblivion, throw.	696
		11. Suggested at Tyndrum in a Storm . . . . . . Enough of garlands, of the Arcadian crook.	696
		12. The Earl of Breadalbane's Ruined Mansion and Family Burial-place, near Killin . . . . . . Well sang the Bard who called the grave, in strains.	696
		13. "Rest and be Thankful!" At the Head of Glencroe . Doubling and doubling with laborious walk.	697
		14. Highland Hut . . . . See what gay wild flowers deck this earth-built Cot.	697
		15. The Brownie . . . . "How disappeared he?" Ask the newt and toad.	697
		16. To the Planet Venus, an Evening Star. Composed at Loch Lomond . . . . Though joy attend Thee orient at the birth.	698
		17. Bothwell Castle. (Passed unseen on account of stormy weather) . . . . Immured in Bothwell's towers, at times the Brave.	698
		18. Picture of Daniel in the Lions' Den, at Hamilton Palace . Amid a fertile region green with wood.	698
		19. The Avon. A Feeder of the Annan . . . . Avon—a precious, an immortal name!	698
		20. Suggested by a View from an Eminence in Inglewood Forest The forest huge of ancient Caledon.	699
		21. Hart's-horn Tree, near Penrith . . . . . Here stood an Oak, that long had borne affixed.	699

Composed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1831	1835	[Yarrow Revisited—*continued.*]	
		22. Fancy and Tradition The Lovers took within this ancient grove.	699
		23. Countess's Pillar While the poor gather round, till the end of time.	699
		24. Roman Antiquities. (From the Roman Station at Old Penrith) How profitless the relics that we cull.	700
		25. Apology for the foregoing Poems No more: the end is sudden and abrupt.	700
		26. The Highland Broach If to Tradition faith be due.	700

1832

1832	1835	Devotional Incitements Where will they stop, those breathing powers.	702
1832	1835	Calm is the fragrant air, and loth to lose	702
1832	1835	Rural Illusions Sylph was it? or a Bird more bright.	703
1832	1835	Loving and Liking. Irregular Verses addressed to a Child. (By my Sister) There's more in words than I can teach.	703
1832	1832	Upon the late General Fast. March 1832 Reluctant call it was; the rite delayed.	704
1832	1832	Filial Piety. (On the wayside between Preston and Liverpool) Untouched through all severity of cold.	704
1832	1832	To B. R. Haydon on seeing his Picture of Napoleon Buonaparte on the Island of St. Helena Haydon! let worthier judges praise the skill.	705
1832	1836	If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven	705

1833

1833	1835	A Wren's Nest Among the dwellings framed by birds.	705
1833 March	1835	To ———, on the birth of her First-born Child, March 1833 Like a shipwrecked Sailor tost.	706
1833	1835	The Warning. A Sequel to the foregoing List, the winds of March are blowing.	707
1833	1835	If this great world of joy and pain	709
1833 April 7	1835	On a high part of the coast of Cumberland, Easter Sunday, April 7, the Author's sixty-third Birthday The Sun, that seemed so mildly to retire.	710
1833	1835	By the Seaside The sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest.	710

Composed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1833	1835	Poems Composed or Suggested during a Tour in the Summer of 1833	711
		1 Adieu, Rydalian Laurels! that have grown	711
		2. Why should the Enthusiast, journeying through this Isle	711
		3. They called Thee MERRY ENGLAND, in old time	711
		4. To the River Greta, near Keswick Greta, what fearful listening! when huge stones.	712
	1819	5. To the River Derwent Among the mountains were we nursed, loved Stream.	712
		6. In sight of the Town of Cockermouth. (Where the Author was born, and his Father's remains are laid) A point of life between my Parent's dust.	712
		7. Address from the Spirit of Cockermouth Castle "Thou look'st upon me, and dost fondly think.	712
		8. Nun's Well, Brigham The cattle crowding round this beverage clear.	712
		9. To a Friend. (On the Banks of the Derwent) Pastor and Patriot!—at whose bidding rise.	713
		10. Mary Queen of Scots. (Landing at the Mouth of the Derwent, Workington) Dear to the Loves, and to the Graces vowed.	713
		11. Stanzas suggested in a Steamboat off St. Bees' Head, on the coast of Cumberland If Life were slumber on a bed of down.	713
		12. In the Channel, between the coast of Cumberland and the Isle of Man Ranging the heights of Scawfell or Black-comb.	716
		13. At Sea off the Isle of Man Bold words affirmèd, in days when faith was strong.	716
		14. Desire we past illusions to recall?	716
		15. On entering Douglas Bay, Isle of Man The feudal Keep, the bastions of Cohorn.	717
		16. By the Seashore, Isle of Man Why stand we gazing on the sparkling Brine.	717
		17. Isle of Man A Youth too certain of his power to wade.	717
		18. Isle of Man Did pangs of grief for lenient time too keen.	718
		19. By a Retired Mariner, H. H. From early youth I ploughed the restless Main.	718
		20. At Bala-Sala, Isle of Man Broken in fortune, but in mind entire.	718
		21. Tynwald Hill Once on the top of Tynwald's formal mound.	718

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1833	1835	[Poems—*continued.*]	
		22. Despond who will—*I* heard a voice exclaim	718
		23. In the Frith of Clyde, Ailsa Crag. During an Eclipse of the Sun, July 17 Since risen from ocean, ocean to defy.	719
		24. On the Frith of Clyde. (In a Steamboat) Arran! a single-crested Teneriffe.	719
		25. On revisiting Dunolly Castle The captive Bird was gone;—to cliff or moor.	719
		26. The Dunolly Eagle Not to the clouds, not to the cliff, he flew.	720
	1827	27. Written in a Blank Leaf of Macpherson's *Ossian* Oft have I caught, upon a fitful breeze.	720
		28. Cave of Staffa We saw, but surely, in the motley crowd.	721
		29. Cave of Staffa. After the Crowd had departed Thanks for the lessons of this Spot—fit school.	721
		30. Cave of Staffa Ye shadowy Beings, that have rights and claims.	721
		31. Flowers on the Top of the Pillars at the Entrance of the Cave Hope smiled when your nativity was cast.	722
		32. Iona On to Iona!—What can she afford.	722
		33. Iona. (Upon Landing) How sad a welcome! To each voyager.	722
		34. The Black Stones of Iona Here on their knees men swore: the stones were black.	722
		35. Homeward we turn. Isle of Columba's Cell	723
		36. Greenock *We* have not passed into a doleful City.	723
		37. "There!" said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride	723
		38. The River Eden, Cumberland Eden! till now thy beauty had I viewed.	724
		39. Monument of Mrs. Howard (by Nollekens) in Wetheral Church, near Corby, on the Banks of the Eden Stretched on the dying Mother's lap, lies dead.	724
		40. Suggested by the foregoing Tranquillity! the sovereign aim wert thou.	724
		41. Nunnery The floods are roused, and will not soon be weary.	725
		42. Steamboats, Viaducts, and Railways Motions and Means, on land and sea at war.	725

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1833	1835	[Poems—*continued.*]	
		43. The Monument commonly called Long Meg and her Daughters, near the River Eden A weight of awe, not easy to be borne.	725
		44. Lowther Lowther! in thy majestic Pile are seen.	726
		45. To the Earl of Lonsdale Lonsdale! it were unworthy of a Guest.	726
		46. The Somnambulist List, ye who pass by Lyulph's Tower.	726
		47. To Cordelia M——, Hallsteads, Ullswater Not in the mines beyond the western main.	728
		48. Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes	728
1833	1845	Composed by the Seashore What mischief cleaves to unsubdued regret.	728

1834

1834	1835	Not in the lucid intervals of life	729
1834	1835	By the Side of Rydal Mere The linnet's warble, sinking towards a close.	730
1834	1835	Soft as a cloud is yon blue Ridge—the Mere	730
1834	1835	The leaves that rustled on this oak-crowned hill	731
1834	1835	The Labourer's Noon-day Hymn Up to the throne of God is borne.	731
1834	1835	The Redbreast. (Suggested in a Westmoreland Cottage) Driven in by Autumn's sharpening air.	732
1834	1835	Lines suggested by a Portrait from the Pencil of F. Stone Beguiled into forgetfulness of care.	733
1834	1835	The foregoing Subject resumed Among a grave fraternity of Monks.	735
1834	1835	To a Child. Written in her Album Small service is true service while it lasts.	735
1834 Nov. 5	1835	Lines written in the Album of the Countess of Lonsdale. November 5, 1834 Lady! a Pen (perhaps with thy regard.	736

1835

1835	1836	To the Moon. (Composed by the Seaside,—on the Coast of Cumberland) Wanderer! that stoop'st so low, and com'st so near.	737
1835	1836	To the Moon. (Rydal) Queen of the Stars!—so gentle, so benign.	738
1835	1836	Written after the Death of Charles Lamb To a good Man of most dear memory.	739

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1835	1836	Extempore Effusion upon the death of James Hogg When first, descending from the moorlands.	741
1835 June 23	1836	Upon seeing a coloured Drawing of the Bird of Paradise in an Album Who rashly strove thy Image to portray?	742
1835	1835	Composed after reading a Newspaper of the Day "People! your chains are severing link by link.	743
1835	1835	By a blest Husband guided, Mary came	743
		[*The following Sonnets appear in the volume* "*Yarrow Revisited, and other Poems*" (1835), *and must therefore belong to that or to a previous year.*]	
1835	1835	1. Desponding Father! mark this altered bough	744
		2. Roman Antiquities discovered at Bishopstone, Herefordshire While poring Antiquarians search the ground.	744
		3. St. Catherine of Ledbury When human touch (as monkish books attest).	744
		4. Why art thou silent! Is thy love a plant	745
		5. Four fiery steeds impatient of the rein	745
		6. To —— "Wait, prithee, wait!" this answer Lesbia threw.	745
		7. Said Secrecy to Cowardice and Fraud	745

1836

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1836 Nov.	1837	November 1836 Even so for me a Vision sanctified.	746
1836	1836	Six months to six years added he remained	746

1837

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1837	1842	Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837. To Henry Crabb Robinson Companion! by whose buoyant Spirit cheered.	747
		1. Musings near Aquapendente. April 1837 Ye Apennines! with all your fertile vales.	747
		2. The Pine of Monte Mario at Rome I saw far off the dark top of a Pine.	753
		3. At Rome Is this, ye Gods, the Capitolian Hill?	753
		4. At Rome—Regrets—In allusion to Niebuhr and other modern Historians Those old credulities, to nature dear.	754
		5. Continued Complacent Fictions were they, yet the same.	754
		6. Plea for the Historian Forbear to deem the Chronicler unwise.	754

Composed. *First Published.* PAGE

1837 1842 [Memorials of a Tour in Italy—*continued.*]

7. At Rome . . . 754
They—who have seen the noble Roman's scorn.

8. Near Rome, in sight of St. Peter's . . . 755
Long has the dew been dried on tree and lawn.

9. At Albano . . . 755
Days passed—and Monte Calvo would not clear.

10. Near Anio's stream, I spied a gentle Dove . . . 755

11. From the Alban Hills, looking towards Rome . . . 755
Forgive, illustrious Country! these deep sighs.

12. Near the Lake of Thrasymene . . . 756
When here with Carthage Rome to conflict came.

13. Near the same Lake . . . 756
For action born, existing to be tried.

14. The Cuckoo at Laverna. May 25, 1837 . . . 756
List—'twas the Cuckoo.—O with what delight.

15. At the Convent of Camaldoli . . . 758
Grieve for the Man who hither came bereft.

16. Continued . . . 758
The world forsaken, all its busy cares.

17. At the Eremite or Upper Convent of Camaldoli . . . 758
What aim had they, the Pair of Monks, in size.

18. At Vallombrosa . . . 759
"Vallombrosa—I longed in thy shadiest wood.

19. At Florence . . . 760
Under the shadow of a stately Pile.

20. Before the Picture of the Baptist, by Raphael, in the Gallery at Florence . . . 760
The Baptist might have been ordained to cry.

21. At Florence—From Michael Angelo . . . 761
Rapt above earth by power of one fair face.

22. At Florence—From M. Angelo . . . 761
Eternal Lord! eased of a cumbrous load.

23. Among the Ruins of a Convent in the Apennines . . . 761
Ye Trees! whose slender roots entwine.

24. In Lombardy . . . 762
See, where his difficult way that Old Man wins.

25. After leaving Italy . . . 762
Fair Land! Thee all men greet with joy; how few

26. Continued . . . 762
As indignation mastered grief, my tongue.

At Bologna, in Remembrance of the late Insurrections, 1837—

1837 1842 1. Ah, why deceive ourselves! by no mere fit . . . 762

2. Hard task! exclaim the undisciplined, to lean . . . 763

3. As leaves are to the tree whereon they grow . . . 763

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1837	1837	What if our numbers barely could defy	763
1837	1842	A Night Thought Lo! where the Moon along the sky.	763

1838

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1838	1838	To the Planet Venus. Upon its approximation (as an Evening Star) to the Earth, January 1838 What strong allurement draws, what spirit guides.	764
1838	1838	Composed at Rydal on May Morning, 1838 If with old love of you, dear Hills! I share.	764
1838	1838	Composed on a May Morning, 1838 Life with yon Lambs, like day, is just begun.	764
1838	1838	Hark! 'tis the Thrush, undaunted, undeprest	765
1838	1838	'Tis He whose yester-evening's high disdain	765
1838	1838	Oh what a Wreck! how changed in mien and speech!	765
1838 May	1838	A Plea for Authors, May 1838 Failing impartial measure to dispense.	765
1838 May 23	1838	A Poet to his Grandchild. (Sequel to the foregoing) "Son of my buried Son, while thus thy hand.	766
1838	1838	Blest Statesman He, whose Mind's unselfish will	766
1838	1838	Valedictory Sonnet. Closing the Volume of Sonnets published in 1838 Serving no haughty Muse, my hands have here.	766
1838	1838	Sonnet, "Protest against the Ballot" Forth rushed, from Envy sprung and Self-conceit.	766

1839

Com-posed.	*First Published.*		PAGE
1839	1841	Sonnets upon the Punishment of Death. In series. [First published in the *Quarterly Review.*]	
		1. Suggested by the View of Lancaster Castle (on the Road from the South) This Spot—at once unfolding sight so fair.	767
		2. Tenderly do we feel by Nature's Law	767
		3. The Roman Consul doomed his sons to die	767
		4. Is *Death*, when evil against good has fought	767
		5. Not to the object specially designed	767
		6. Ye brood of conscience—Spectres! that frequent	768
		7. Before the world had passed her time of youth	768
		8. Fit retribution, by the moral code	768
		9. Though to give timely warning and deter	768

Com-posed.	First Published.		PAGE
1839	1841	[Sonnets upon the Punishment of Death—*continued.*]	
		10. Our bodily life, some plead, that life the shrine	768
		11. Ah, think how one compelled for life to abide	769
		12. See the Condemned alone within his cell	769
		13. Conclusion Yes, though He well may tremble at the sound.	769
		14. Apology The formal World relaxes her cold chain.	769

1840

Com-posed.	First Published.		PAGE
1840 Jan. 1	1850	Sonnet on a Portrait of I. F., painted by Margaret Gillies We gaze—nor grieve to think that we must die.	770
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THE Text and Notes are from the Edition of 1857, and the order is Mr. Knight's Chronological one printed in the Transactions of the Wordsworth Society.

INTRODUCTION

THE poet whose works are contained in the present volume was born in the little town of Cockermouth, in Cumberland, on April 7, 1770. He died at Rydal Mount in the neighbouring county of Westmoreland, on April 23, 1850. In this long span of mortal years, events of vast and enduring moment shook the world. A handful of scattered and dependent colonies in the northern continent of America made themselves into one of the most powerful and beneficent of states. The ancient monarchy of France, and all the old ordering of which the monarchy had been the keystone, was overthrown, and it was not until after many a violent shock of arms, after terrible slaughter of men, after strange diplomatic combinations, after many social convulsions, after many portentous mutations of Empire, that Europe once more settled down for a season into established order and system. In England almost alone, after the loss of her great possessions across the Atlantic Ocean, the fabric of the State stood fast and firm. Yet here, too, in these eighty years, an old order slowly gave place to new. The restoration of peace, after a war conducted with extraordinary tenacity and fortitude, led to a still more wonderful display of ingenuity, industry, and enterprise, in the more fruitful field of commerce and of manufactures. Wealth, in spite of occasional vicissitudes, increased with amazing rapidity. The population of England and Wales grew from being seven and a half millions in 1770, to nearly eighteen millions in 1850. Political power was partially transferred from a territorial aristocracy to the middle and trading classes. Laws were made at once more equal and more humane. During all the tumult of the great war which for so many years bathed Europe in fire, through all the throes and agitations in which peace brought forth the new time, Wordsworth for half a century (1799-1850) dwelt sequestered in unbroken composure and steadfastness in his chosen home amid the mountains and lakes of his native region, working out his own ideal of the poet's high office.

The interpretation of life in books and the development of imagination underwent changes of its own. Most of the great lights of the eighteenth century were still burning, though burning low, when Wordsworth came into the world. Pope, indeed, had been dead for six and twenty years, and all the rest of the Queen Anne men had gone. But Gray only died in 1771, and Goldsmith in 1774. Ten years later Johnson's pious and manly heart ceased to beat. Voltaire and Rousseau, those two diverse oracles of their age, both died in 1778. Hume had passed away two years before. Cowper was forty years older than Wordsworth, but Cowper's most delightful work was not produced until 1783. Crabbe, who anticipated Wordsworth's choice of themes from rural life, while treating them with a sterner realism, was virtually his contemporary, having been born in 1754, and dying in 1832. The two great names of his own date were Scott and Coleridge, the first born in 1771, and the second a year afterwards. Then a generation later came another new and illustrious group. Byron was born in 1788, Shelley in 1792, and Keats in 1795. Wordsworth was destined to see one more orb of the first purity and brilliance rise to its place in the poetic firmament. Tennyson's earliest volume of poems was published in 1830, and *In Memoriam*, one of his two masterpieces, in 1850. Any one who realises for how much these famous names will always stand in the history of human genius, may measure the great transition that Wordsworth's eighty years witnessed in some of men's deepest feelings about art and life and "the speaking face of earth and heaven."

Here, too, Wordsworth stood isolated and apart. "Scott and Southey were valued friends, but he thought little of Scott's poetry, and less of Southey's. Byron and Shelley he seems scarcely to have read; and he failed altogether to appreciate Keats." (*Myers.*) Of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* he said, "There is something in the madness of this man which interests me more than the sanity of Lord Byron and Walter Scott." Coleridge was the only man of the shining company with whom he ever had any real intimacy of mind, for whom he ever nourished real deference and admiration, as one "unrelentingly possessed by thirst of greatness, love, and beauty," and in whose intellectual power, as the noble lines in the Sixth Book of the *Prelude* so gorgeously attest, he took the passionate interest of a man at once master, disciple, and friend. It is true to say, as Emerson says, that Wordsworth's genius was the great exceptional fact of the literature of his period; but he had no teachers nor inspirers save nature and solitude.

Wordsworth was the son of a solicitor, and all his early circumstances were homely, unpretentious, and rather straitened. His mother died when he was eight years old, and when his father followed her five years later, two of his uncles provided means for continuing at Cambridge the education which had been begun in the rural grammar school of Hawkshead. It was in 1787 that he went up to St. John's College. He took his Bachelor's degree at the beginning of 1791, and there his connection with the university ended.

For some years after leaving Cambridge, Wordsworth let himself drift. He did not feel good enough for the Church; he shrank from the law; fancying that he had talents for command, he thought of being a soldier. Meanwhile, he passed a short time desultorily in London. Towards the end of 1791, through Paris, he passed on to Orleans and Blois, where he made some friends and spent most of a year. He returned to Paris in October 1792. France was no longer standing on the top of golden hours. The September massacres filled the sky with a lurid flame. Wordsworth still retained his ardent faith in the Revolution, and was even ready, though no better than "a landsman on the deck of a ship struggling with a hideous storm," to make common cause with the Girondists. But the prudence of friends at home forced him back to England before the beginning of the terrible year of '93. With his return closed that first survey of its inheritance, which most serious souls are wont to make in the fervid prime of early manhood.

It would be idle to attempt any commentary on the bare facts that we have just recapitulated; for Wordsworth himself has clothed them with their full force and meaning in the *Prelude*. This record of the growth of a poet's mind, told by the poet himself with all the sincerity of which he was capable, is never likely to be popular. Of that, as of so much more of his poetry, we must say that, as a whole, it has not the musical, harmonious, sympathetic quality which seizes us in even the prose of such a book as Rousseau's *Confessions*. Macaulay thought the *Prelude* a poorer and more tiresome *Excursion*, with the old flimsy philosophy about the effect of scenery on the mind, the old crazy mystical metaphysics, and the endless wildernesses of twaddle; still he admits that there are some fine descriptions and energetic declamations. All Macaulay's tastes and habits of mind made him a poor judge of such a poet as Wordsworth. He valued spirit, energy, pomp, stateliness of form and diction, and actually thought Dryden's fine lines about to-morrow being falser than the former day, as fine as any eight lines in Lucretius. But his words truly express the effect of the *Prelude* on more vulgar minds than his own. George Eliot, on the other hand, who had the inward eye that was not among Macaulay's gifts, found the *Prelude* full of material for a daily liturgy, and it is easy to imagine how she lingered as she did, over such a thought as this—

> "There is
> One great society alone on earth:
> The noble Living and the noble Dead."

There is, too, as may be found imbedded even in Wordsworth's dullest work, many a line of the truest poetical quality, such as that on Newton's statue in the silent Chapel of Trinity College—

> "The marble index of a mind for ever
> Voyaging through strange seas of Thought alone."

Apart, however, from beautiful lines like this, and from many noble passages of high reflection set to sonorous verse, this remarkable poem is in its whole effect unique in impressive power, as a picture of the advance of an elect and serious spirit from childhood and school-time, through the ordeal of adolescence, through close contact with stirring and enormous events, to the stage when it has found the sources of its strength, and is fully and finally prepared to put its temper to the proof.

The three Books that describe the poet's residence in France have a special and a striking value of their own. Their presentation of the phases of good men's minds as the successive scenes of the Revolution unfolded themselves, has real historic interest. More than this, it is an abiding lesson to brave men how to bear themselves in hours of public stress. It portrays exactly that mixture of persevering faith and hope with firm and reasoned judgment, with which I like to think that Turgot, if he had lived, would have confronted the workings of the Revolutionary power. Great masters in many kinds have been inspired by the French Revolution. Human genius might seem to have exhausted itself in the burning political passion of Burke, in the glowing melodrama of fire and tears of Carlyle, Michelet, Hugo; but the ninth, tenth, and eleventh Books of the *Prelude*, by their strenuous simplicity, their deep truthfulness, their slowfooted and inexorable transition from ardent hope to dark imaginations, sense of woes to come, sorrow for human kind, and pain of heart, breathe the very spirit of the great catastrophe. There is none of the ephemeral glow of the political exhortation, none of the tiresome falsity of the dithyramb in history. Wordsworth might well wish that some dramatic tale, endued with livelier shapes and flinging out less guarded words, might set forth the lessons of his experience. The material was fitting. The story of these three Books has something of the severity, the self-control, the inexorable necessity of classic tragedy, and like classic tragedy it has a noble end. The dregs and sour sediment that reaction from exaggerated hope is so apt to stir in poor natures, had no place here. The French Revolution made the one crisis in Wordsworth's mental history, the one heavy assault on his continence of soul, and when he emerged from it all his greatness remained to him. After a long spell of depression, bewilderment, mortification, and sore disappointment, the old faith in new shapes was given back.

> "Nature's self,
> By all varieties of human love
> Assisted, led me back through opening day
> To those sweet counsels between head and heart
> Whence grew that genuine knowledge, fraught with peace,
> Which, through the later sinkings of this cause,
> Hath still upheld me and upholds me now."

It was six years after his return from France before Wordsworth finally settled down in the scenes with which his name and the power of his genius were to be for ever associated. During this interval it was that two great sources of personal influence were opened to him. He entered upon that close and beloved companionship with his sister, which remained unbroken to the end of their days; and he first made the acquaintance of Coleridge. The character of Dorothy Wordsworth has long taken its place in the gallery of admirable and devoted women who have inspired the work and the thoughts of great men. "She is a woman, indeed," said Coleridge, "in mind, I mean, and heart; for her person is such that if you expected to see a pretty woman, you would think her rather ordinary; if you expected to see an ordinary woman, you would think her pretty." To the solidity, sense, and strong intelligence of the Wordsworth stock, she added a grace, a warmth, and liveliness peculiarly her own. Her nature shines transparent in her letters, her truly admirable journal, and in every report that we have of her. Wordsworth's own feelings for her, and his sense of the debt that he owed to her faithful affection and eager mind, he has placed on lasting record.

The intimacy with Coleridge was, as has been said, Wordsworth's one strong friendship, and must be counted among the highest examples of that generous relation between great writers. Unlike in the quality of their genius, and unlike in force of character and the fortunes of life, they remained bound to one another by sympathies that neither time nor harsh trial ever extinguished. Coleridge had left Cambridge in 1794, had married, had started various unsuccessful projects for combining the improvement of mankind with the earning of an income, and was now settled in a small cottage at Nether Stowey in Somersetshire, with an acre and a half of land, from which he hoped to raise corn and vegetables enough to support himself and his wife, as well as to feed a couple of pigs on the refuse. Wordsworth and his sister were settled at Racedown, near Crewkerne, in Dorsetshire. In 1797 they moved to Alfoxden in Somersetshire, their principal inducement to the change being Coleridge's society. The friendship bore fruit in the production of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, mainly the work of Wordsworth, but containing no less notable a contribution from Coleridge than the *Ancient Mariner*. The two poets only received thirty guineas for their work, and the publisher lost his money. The taste of the country was not yet ripe for Wordsworth's poetic experiment.

Immediately after the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*, the two Wordsworths and Coleridge started from Yarmouth for Hamburg. Coleridge's account in Satyrane's Letters, published in the *Biographia Literaria*, of the voyage and of the conversations between the two English poets and Klopstock, is worth turning to. The pastor told them that Klopstock was the German Milton. "A very German Milton indeed," they thought. The Wordsworths remained for four wintry months at Goslar in Saxony, while Coleridge went on to Ratzeburg, Göttingen, and other places, mastering German, and "delving in the unwholesome quicksilver mines of metaphysic depths." Wordsworth made little way with the language, but worked diligently at his own verse.

When they came back to England, Wordsworth and his sister found their hearts turning with irresistible attraction to their own familiar countryside. They at last made their way to Grasmere. The opening book of the *Recluse*, which is published for the first time in the present volume, describes in fine verse the emotions and the scene. The face of this delicious vale is not quite what it was when

> "Cottages of mountain stone
> Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
> And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
> Or glancing at each other cheerful looks
> Like separated stars with clouds between."

But it is foolish to let ourselves be fretted by the villa, the hotel, and the tourist. We may well be above all this in a scene that is haunted by a great poetic shade. The substantial features and elements of beauty still remain, the crags and woody steeps, the lake, "its one green island and its winding shores; the multitude of little rocky hills." Wordsworth was not the first poet to feel its fascination. Gray visited the Lakes in the autumn of 1769, and coming into the vale of Grasmere from the north-west, declared it to be one of the sweetest landscapes that art ever attempted to imitate, an unsuspected paradise of peace and rusticity. We cannot indeed compare the little crystal mere, set like a gem in the verdant circle of the hills, with the grandeur and glory of Lucerne, or the radiant gladness and expanse of Como: yet it has an inspiration of its own, to delight, to soothe, to fortify, and to refresh.

> "What want we? have we not perpetual streams,
> Warm woods, and sunny hills, and fresh green fields,
> And mountains not less green, and flocks and herds,
> And thickets full of songsters, and the voice
> Of lordly birds, an unexpected sound
> Heard now and then from morn to latest eve,
> Admonishing the man who walks below
> Of solitude and silence in the sky.
> These have we, and a thousand nooks of earth
> Have also these, but nowhere else is found,
> Nowhere (or is it fancy?) can be found
> The one sensation that is here; . . .
> 'tis the sense
> Of majesty, and beauty, and repose,
> A blended holiness of earth and sky,
> Something that makes this individual spot,
> This small abiding-place of many men,
> A termination, and a last retreat,
> A centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
> A whole without dependence or defect,
> Made for itself, and happy in itself,
> Perfect contentment, Unity entire."

In the Grasmere vale Wordsworth lived for half a century, first in a little cottage at the northern corner of the lake, and then (1813) in a more commodious house at Rydal Mount at the southern end, on the road to Ambleside. In 1802 he married Mary Hutchinson, of Penrith, and this completed the circle of his felicity. Mary, he once said, was to his ear the most musical and most truly English in sound of all the names we have. The name was of harmonious omen. The two beautiful sonnets that he wrote on his wife's portrait long years after, when "morning into noon had passed, noon into eve," show how much her large heart and humble mind had done for the blessedness of his home.

Their life was almost more simple than that of the dalesmen their neighbours. "It is my opinion," ran one of his oracular sayings to Sir George Beaumont, "that a man of letters, and indeed all public men of every pursuit, should be severely frugal." Means were found for supporting the modest home out of two or three small windfalls bequeathed by friends or relatives, and by the time that children had begun to come, Wordsworth was raised to affluence by obtaining the post of distributor of stamps for Westmoreland and part of Cumberland. His life was happily devoid of striking external incident. Its essential part lay in meditation and composition.

He was surrounded by friends. Southey had made a home for himself and his beloved library a few miles over the hills at Keswick. De Quincey, with his clever brains and shallow character, took up his abode in the cottage which Wordsworth had first lived in at Grasmere. Coleridge, born the most golden genius of them all, came to and fro in those fruitless unhappy wanderings which consumed a life that once promised to be so rich in blessing and in glory. In later years Dr. Arnold built a house at Fox How, attracted by the Wordsworths and the scenery; and other lesser lights came into the neighbourhood. "Our intercourse with the Wordsworths," Arnold wrote on the occasion of his first visit in 1832, "was one of the brightest spots of all; nothing could exceed their friendliness, and my almost daily walks with him were things not to be forgotten. Once and once only we had a good fight about the Reform Bill during a walk up Greenhead Ghyll to see the unfinished sheepfold, recorded in *Michael*. But I am sure that our political disagreement did not at all interfere with our enjoyment of each other's society; for I think that in the great principles of things we agreed very entirely." It ought to be possible, for that matter, for magnanimous men, even if they do not agree in the great principles of things, to keep pleasant terms with one another for more than one afternoon's walk. Many pilgrims came, and the poet seems to have received them with cheerful equanimity. Emerson called upon him in 1833, and found him plain, elderly, white-haired, not prepossessing. "He led me out into his garden, and showed me the gravel walk in which thousands of his lines were composed. He had just returned from Staffa, and within three days had made three sonnets on Fingal's Cave, and was composing a fourth when he was called in to see me. He said, 'If you are interested in my verses, perhaps you will like to hear these lines.' I gladly assented, and he recollected himself for a few moments, and then stood forth and repeated, one after another, the three entire sonnets with great animation. This recitation was so unlooked for and surprising—he, the old Wordsworth, standing apart, and reciting to me in a garden-walk like a schoolboy declaiming—that I was at first near to laugh; but recollecting myself, that I had come thus far to see a poet, and he was chanting poems to me, I saw that he was right, and I was wrong, and gladly gave myself up to him. He never was in haste to publish; partly because he corrected a good deal. . . . He preferred such of his poems as touched the affections to any others; for whatever is didactic—what theories of society and so on—might perish quickly, but whatever combined a truth with an affection was good to-day and good for ever." (*English Traits*, ch. i.)

Wordsworth was far too wise to encourage the pilgrims to turn into abiding sojourners in his chosen land. Clough has described how, when he was a lad of eighteen (1837), with a mild surprise he heard the venerable poet correct the tendency to exaggerate the importance of flowers and fields, lakes, waterfalls, and scenery. "People come to the Lakes," said Wordsworth, "and are charmed with a particular spot, and build a house, and find themselves discontented, forgetting that these things are only the sauce and garnish of life."

In spite of a certain hardness and stiffness, Wordsworth must have been an admirable companion for anybody capable of true elevation of mind. The unfortunate Haydon says, with his usual accent of enthusiasm, after a saunter at Hampstead, "Never did any man so beguile the time as Wordsworth. His purity of heart, his kindness, his soundness of principle, his information, his knowledge, and the intense and eager feelings with which he pours forth all he knows, affect, interest, and enchant one." (*Autobiog.* i. 298, 384.) The diary of Crabb Robinson, the correspondence of Charles Lamb, the delightful autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher, and much less delightfully the autobiography of Harriet Martineau, all help us to realise by many a trait Wordsworth's daily walk and conversation. Of all the glimpses that we get, from these and many other sources, none are more pleasing than those of the intercourse between Wordsworth and Scott. They were the two manliest and most wholesome men of genius of their time. They held different theories of poetic art, but their affection and esteem for one another never varied, from the early days when Scott and his young wife visited Wordsworth in his cottage at Grasmere, down to that sorrowful autumn evening (1831) when Wordsworth and his daughter went to Abbotsford to bid farewell to the wondrous potentate, then just about to start on his vain search for new life, followed by "the might of the whole earth's good wishes."

Of Wordsworth's demeanour and physical presence, De Quincey's account, silly, coxcombical, and vulgar, is the worst; Carlyle's, as might be expected from his magical gift of portraiture, is the best. Carlyle cared little for Wordsworth's poetry, had a real respect for the antique greatness of his devotion to Poverty and Peasanthood, recognised his strong intellectual powers and strong character, but thought him rather dull, bad-tempered, unproductive, and almost wearisome, and found his divine reflections and unfathomabilities stinted, scanty, uncertain, palish. From these and many other disparagements, one gladly passes to the picture of the poet as he was in the flesh at a breakfast party given by Henry Taylor, at a tavern in St. James's Street, in 1840. The subject of the talk was Literature, its laws, practices, and observances:—"He talked well in his way; with veracity, easy brevity, and force; as a wise tradesman would of his tools and workshop, and as no unwise one could. His voice was good, frank, and sonorous, though practically clear, distinct, and forcible, rather than melodious; the tone of him business-like, sedately confident, no discourtesy, yet no anxiety about being courteous: a fine wholesome rusticity, fresh as his mountain breezes, sat well on the stalwart veteran, and on all he said and did. You would have said he was a usually taciturn man, glad to unlock himself, to audience sympathetic and intelligent, when such offered itself. His face bore marks of much, not always peaceful, meditation; the look of it not bland or benevolent, so much as close, impregnable, and hard; a man *multa tacere loquive paratus*, in a world where he had experienced no lack of contradictions as he strode along! The eyes were not very brilliant, but they had a quiet clearness; there was enough of brow, and well shaped; rather too much of cheek ('horse-face,' I have heard satirists say), face of squarish shape and decidedly longish, as I think the head itself was (*its* 'length' going *horizontal*): he was large-boned, lean, but still firm-knit, tall, and strong-looking when he stood; a right good old steel-gray figure, with a fine rustic simplicity and dignity about him, and a veracious *strength* looking through him which might have suited one of those old steel-gray *Markgrafs* (Graf = *Grau*, 'Steel-gray') whom Henry the Fowler set up to ward the marches, and do battle with the intrusive heathen, in a stalwart and judicious manner."

Whoever might be his friends within an easy walk, or dwelling afar, the poet knew how to live his own life. The three fine sonnets headed *Personal Talk*, so well known, so warmly accepted in our better hours, so easily forgotten in hours not so good between pleasant levities and grinding preoccupations, show us how little his neighbours had to do with the poet's genial seasons of "smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought."

For those days Wordsworth was a considerable traveller. Between 1820 and 1837 he made long tours abroad, to Switzerland, to Holland, to Belgium, to Italy. In other years he visited Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. He was no mechanical tourist, admiring to order and marvelling by regulation; and he confessed to Mrs. Fletcher that he fell asleep before the Venus de Medici at Florence. But the product of these wanderings is to be seen in some of his best sonnets, such as the first on Calais Beach, the famous one on Westminster Bridge, the second of the two on Bruges, where "the Spirit of Antiquity mounts to the seat of grace within the mind—a deeper peace than that in deserts found"—and in some other fine pieces.

In weightier matters than mere travel, Wordsworth showed himself no mere recluse. He watched the great affairs then being transacted in Europe with the ardent interest of his youth, and his sonnets to Liberty, commemorating the attack by France upon the Swiss, the fate of Venice, the struggle of Hofer, the resistance of Spain, give no unworthy expression to the best of the varied motives that animated England in her long struggle with Bonaparte. The sonnet to Toussaint l'Ouverture concludes with some of the noblest lines in the English language. The strong verses on the expected death of Mr. Fox are alive with a magnanimous public spirit that goes deeper than political opinion. In his young days he had sent Fox a copy of the *Lyrical Ballads*, with a long letter indicating his sense of Fox's great and generous qualities. Pitt, he admits that he could never regard with complacency. "I believe him, however," he said, "to have been as disinterested a man, and as true a lover of his country, as it was possible for so ambitious a man to be. His first wish (though probably unknown to himself) was that his country should prosper under his administration; his next that it should prosper. Could the order of these wishes have been reversed, Mr. Pitt would have avoided many of the grievous mistakes into which, I think, he fell." "You always went away from Burke," he once told Haydon, "with your mind filled; from Fox with your feelings excited; and from Pitt with wonder at his having had the power to make the worse appear the better reason."

Of the poems composed under the influence of that best kind of patriotism which ennobles local attachments by associating them with the lasting elements of moral grandeur and heroism, it is needless to speak. They have long taken their place as something higher even than literary classics. As years began to dull the old penetration of a mind which had once approached, like other youths, the shield of human nature from the golden side, and had been eager to "clear a passage for just government," Wordsworth lost his interest in progress. Waterloo may be taken for the date at which his social grasp began to fail, and with it his poetic glow. He opposed Catholic emancipation as stubbornly as Eldon, and the Reform Bill as bitterly as Croker. For the practical reforms of his day, even in education, for which he had always spoken up, Wordsworth was not a force. His heart clung to England as he found it. "This concrete attachment to the scenes about him," says Mr. Myers, "had always formed an important element in his character. Ideal politics, whether in Church or State, had never occupied his mind, which sought rather to find its informing principles embodied in the England of his own day." This flowed, we may suppose, from Burke. In a passage in the seventh Book of the *Prelude*, he describes, in lines a little prosaic but quite true, how he sat, saw, and heard, not unthankful nor uninspired, the great orator.

> "While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,
> Against all systems, built on abstract rights."

The Church, as conceived by the spirit of Laud, and described by Hooker's voice, was the great symbol of the union of high and stable institution with thought, faith, right living, and "sacred religion, mother of form and fear." As might be expected from such a point of view, the church pieces, to which Wordsworth gave so much thought, are, with few exceptions, such as the sonnet on *Seathwaite Chapel*, formal, hard, and but thinly enriched with spiritual grace or unction. They are ecclesiastical, not religious. In religious poetry, the Church of England finds her most affecting voice, not in Wordsworth, but in the *Lyra Innocentium* and the *Christian Year*. Wordsworth abounds in the true devotional cast of mind, but less than anywhere else in his properly ecclesiastical verse.

It was perhaps natural that when events no longer inspired him, Wordsworth should have turned with new feelings towards the classic, and discovered a virtue in classic form to which his own method had hitherto made him a little blind. Towards the date of Waterloo, he read over again some of the Latin writers, in attempting to prepare his son for college. He even at a later date set about a translation of the *Æneid* of Virgil, but the one permanent result of the classic movement in his mind is *Laodamia*. Earlier in life he had translated some books of Ariosto at the rate of a hundred lines a day, and he even attempted fifteen of the sonnets of Michael Angelo, but so much meaning is compressed into so little room in those pieces that he found the difficulty insurmountable. He had a high opinion of the resources of the Italian language. The poetry of Dante and of Michael Angelo, he said, proves that if there be little majesty and strength in Italian verse, the fault is in the authors and not in the tongue.

Our last glimpse of Wordsworth in the full and peculiar power of his genius is the Ode *Composed on an evening of extraordinary splendour and beauty*. It is the one exception to the critical dictum that all his good work was done in the decade between 1798 and 1808. He lived for more than thirty years after this fine composition. But he added nothing more of value to the work that he had already done. The public appreciation of it was very slow. The most influential among the critics were for long hostile and contemptuous. Never at any time did Wordsworth come near to such popularity as that of Scott or of Byron. Nor was that all. For many years most readers of poetry thought more even of *Lalla Rookh* than of the *Excursion.* While Scott, Byron, and Moore were receiving thousands of pounds, Wordsworth received nothing. Between 1830 and 1840 the current turned in Wordsworth's direction, and when he received the honour of a doctor's degree at the Oxford Commemoration in 1839, the Sheldonian theatre made him the hero of the day. In the spring of 1843 Southey died, and Sir Robert Peel pressed Wordsworth to succeed him in the office of Poet Laureate. "It is a tribute of respect," said the Minister, "justly due to the first of living poets." But almost immediately the light of his common popularity was eclipsed by Tennyson, as it had earlier been eclipsed by Scott, by Byron, and in some degree by Shelley. Yet his fame among those who know, among competent critics with a right to judge, to-day stands higher than it ever stood. Only two writers have contributed so many lines of daily popularity and application. In the handbooks of familiar quotations Wordsworth fills more space than anybody save Shakespeare and Pope. He exerted commanding influence over great minds that have powerfully affected our generation. "I never before," said George Eliot in the days when her character was forming itself (1839), "met with so many of my own feelings expressed just as I should like them," and her reverence for Wordsworth remained to the end. J. S. Mill has described how important an event in his life was his first reading of Wordsworth. "What made his poems a medicine for my state of mind was that they expressed not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. I needed to be made to feel that there was real permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth taught me this, not only without turning away from, but with greatly increased interest in the common feelings and common destiny of human beings." (*Autobiog.*, 148.) This effect of Wordsworth on Mill is the very illustration of the phrase of a later poet of our own day, one of the most eminent and by his friends best beloved of all those whom Wordsworth had known, and on whom he poured out a generous portion of his own best spirit:—

> "Time may restore us in his course
> Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force:
> But where will Europe's latter hour
> Again find Wordsworth's healing power?"

It is the power for which Matthew Arnold found this happy designation, that compensates us for that absence of excitement of which the heedless complain in Wordsworth's verse—excitement so often meaning mental fever, hysterics, distorted passion, or other fitful agitation of the soul.

Pretensions are sometimes advanced as to Wordsworth's historic position, which involve a mistaken view of literary history. Thus, we are gravely told by the too zealous Wordsworthian that the so-called poets of the eighteenth century were simply men of letters; they had various accomplishments and great general ability, but their thoughts were expressed in prose, or in mere metrical diction, which passed current as poetry without being so. Yet Burns belonged wholly to the eighteenth century (1759-96), and no verse-writer is so little literary as Burns, so little prosaic; no writer more truly poetic in melody, diction, thought, feeling, and spontaneous song. It was Burns who showed Wordsworth's own youth "How verse may build a princely throne on humble truth." Nor can we understand how Cowper is to be set down as simply a man of letters. We may, too, if we please, deny the name of poetry to Collins's tender and pensive *Ode to Evening;* but we can only do this on critical principles, which would end in classing the author of *Lycidas* and *Comus*, of the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, as a writer of various accomplishments and great general ability, but at bottom simply a man of letters and by no means a poet. It is to Gray, however, that we must turn for the distinctive character of the best poetry of the eighteenth century. With reluctance we will surrender the Pindaric Odes, though not without risking the observation that some of Wordsworth's own criticism on Gray is as narrow and as much beside the mark as Jeffrey's on the *Excursion.* But the *Ode on Eton College* is not to have grudged to it the noble name and true quality of poetry, merely because, as one of Johnson's most unfortunate criticisms expresses it, the ode suggests nothing to Gray which every beholder does not equally think and feel. To find beautiful and pathetic language, set to harmonious numbers, for the common impressions of meditative minds, is no small part of the poet's task. That part has never been achieved by any poet in any tongue, with more complete perfection and success than in the immortal *Elegy*, of which we may truly say that it has for nearly a century and a half given to greater multitudes of men more of the exquisite pleasure of poetry than any other single piece in all the glorious treasury of English verse. It abounds, as Johnson says, "with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo." These moving commonplaces of the human lot, Gray approached through books and studious contemplation; not, as Wordsworth approached them, by daily contact with the lives and habit of men and the forces and magical apparitions of external nature. But it is a narrow view to suppose that the men of the eighteenth century did not look through the literary conventions of the day to the truths of life and nature behind them. The conventions have gone, or are changed, and we are all glad of it. Wordsworth effected a wholesome deliverance when he attacked the artificial diction, the personifications, the allegories, the antitheses, the barren rhymes and monotonous metres, which the reigning taste had approved. But while welcoming the new freshness, sincerity, and direct and fertile return on nature, that is a very bad reason why we should disparage poetry so genial, so simple, so humane, and so perpetually pleasing as the best verse of the rationalistic century.

What Wordsworth did was to deal with themes that had been partially handled by precursors and contemporaries, in a larger and more devoted spirit, with wider amplitude of illustration, and with the steadfastness and persistency of a religious teacher. "Every great poet is a teacher," he said; "I wish to be considered as a teacher or as nothing." It may be doubted whether his general proposition is at all true, and whether it is any more the essential business of a poet to be a teacher than it was the business of Handel, Beethoven, or Mozart. They attune the soul to high states of feeling; the direct lesson is often as nought. But of himself no view could be more sound. He is a teacher, or he is nothing. "To console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and therefore to become more actively and sincerely virtuous"—that was his vocation; to show that the mutual adaptation of the external world and the inner mind is able to shape a paradise from the "simple produce of the common day"—that was his high argument.

Simplification was, as I have said elsewhere, the keynote of the revolutionary time. Wordsworth was its purest exponent, but he had one remarkable peculiarity, which made him, in England at least, not only its purest but its greatest. While leading men to pierce below the artificial and conventional to the natural man and natural life, as Rousseau did, Wordsworth still cherished the symbols, the traditions, and the great institutes of social order. Simplification of life and thought and feeling was to be accomplished without summoning up the dangerous spirit of destruction and revolt. Wordsworth lived with nature, yet waged no angry railing war against society. The chief opposing force to Wordsworth in literature was Byron. Whatever he was in his heart, Byron in his work was drawn by all the forces of his character, genius, and circumstances to the side of violent social change, and hence the extraordinary popularity of Byron in the continental camp of emancipation. Communion with nature is in Wordsworth's doctrine the school of duty. With Byron nature is the mighty consoler and the vindicator of the rebel.

A curious thing, which we may note in passing, is that Wordsworth, who clung fervently to the historic foundations of society as it stands, was wholly indifferent to history; while Byron, on the contrary, as the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* is enough to show, had at least the sentiment of history in as great a degree as any poet that ever lived, and has given to it by far the most magnificent expression. No doubt, it was history on its romantic, and not its philosophic or its political side.

On Wordsworth's exact position in the hierarchy of sovereign poets, a deep difference of estimate still divides even the most excellent judges. Nobody now dreams of placing him so low as the *Edinburgh Reviewers* did, nor so high as Southey placed him when he wrote to the author of *Philip van Artevelde* in 1829, that a greater poet than Wordsworth there never has been nor ever will be. An extravagance of this kind was only the outburst of generous friendship. Coleridge deliberately placed Wordsworth "nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton, yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own." Arnold, himself a poet of rare and memorable quality, declares his firm belief that the poetical performance of Wordsworth is, after that of Shakespeare and Milton, undoubtedly the most considerable in our language from the Elizabethan age to the present time. Dryden, Pope, Gray, Cowper, Goldsmith, Burns, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats—"Wordsworth's name deserves to stand, and will finally stand, above them all." Mr. Myers, also a poet, and the author of a volume on Wordsworth as much distinguished by insight as by admirable literary grace and power, talks of "a Plato, a Dante, a Wordsworth," all three in a breath, as stars of equal magnitude in the great spiritual firmament. To Mr. Swinburne, on the contrary, all these panegyrical estimates savour of monstrous and intolerable exaggeration. Amid these contentions of celestial minds it will be safest to content ourselves with one or two plain observations in the humble positive degree, without hurrying into high and final comparatives and superlatives.

One admission is generally made at the outset. Whatever definition of poetry we fix upon, whether that it is the language of passion or imagination formed into regular numbers; or, with Milton, that it should be "simple, sensuous, passionate;" in any case there are great tracts in Wordsworth which, by no definition and on no terms, can be called poetry. If we say with Shelley, that poetry is what redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man, and is the record of the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds, then are we bound to agree that Wordsworth records too many moments that are not specially good or happy, that he redeems from decay frequent visitations that are not from any particular divinity in man, and treats them all as very much on a level. Mr. Arnold is undoubtedly right in his view that, to be receivable as a classic, Wordsworth must be relieved of a great deal of the poetical baggage that now encumbers him.

The faults and hindrances in Wordsworth's poetry are obvious to every reader. For one thing, the intention to instruct, to improve the occasion, is too deliberate and too hardly pressed. "We hate poetry," said Keats, "that has a palpable design upon us. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive." Charles Lamb's friendly remonstrance on one of Wordsworth's poems is applicable to more of them. "The instructions conveyed in it are too direct; they don't slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter."

Then, except the sonnets and half a score of the pieces where he reaches his topmost height, there are few of his poems that are not too long, and it often happens even that no degree of reverence for the teacher prevents one from finding passages of almost unbearable prolixity. A defence was once made by a great artist for what, to the unregenerate mind, seemed the merciless tardiness of movement in one of Goethe's romances, that it was meant to impress on his readers the slow march and the tedium of events in human life. The lenient reader may give Wordsworth the advantage of the same ingenious explanation. We may venture on a counsel which is more to the point, in warning the student that not seldom in these blocks of afflicting prose, suddenly we come upon some of the profoundest and most beautiful passages that the poet ever wrote. In deserts of preaching we find, almost within sight of one another, delightful oases of purest poetry. Besides being prolix, Wordsworth is often cumbrous; has often no flight; is not liquid, is not musical. He is heavy and self-conscious with the burden of his message. How much at his best he is, when, as in the admirable and truly Wordsworthian poem of *Michael*, he spares us a sermon and leaves us the story. Then, he is apt to wear a somewhat stiff-cut garment of solemnity, when not solemnity, but either sternness or sadness, which are so different things, would seem the fitter mood. In truth Wordsworth hardly knows how to be stern, as Dante or Milton was stern; nor has he the note of plangent sadness which strikes the ear in men as morally inferior to him as Rousseau, Keats, Shelley, or Coleridge; nor has he the Olympian air with which Goethe delivered sage oracles. This mere solemnity is specially oppressive in some parts of the *Excursion*—the performance where we best see the whole poet, and where the poet most absolutely identifies himself with his subject. Yet, even in the midst of these solemn discoursings, he suddenly introduces an episode in which his peculiar power is at its height. There is no better instance of this than the passage in the Second Book of the *Excursion*, where he describes with a fidelity, at once realistic and poetic, the worn-out almsman, his patient life and sorry death, and then the unimaginable vision in the skies, as they brought the ancient man down through dull mists from the mountain ridge to die. These hundred and seventy lines are like the landscape in which they were composed; you can no more appreciate the beauty of the one by a single or a second perusal, than you can the other in a scamper through the vale on the box of the coach. But any lover of poetry who will submit himself with leisure and meditation to the impressions of the story, the pity of it, the naturalness of it, the glory and the mystic splendours of the indifferent heavens, will feel that here indeed is the true strength which out of the trivial raises expression for the pathetic and the sublime.

Apart, however, from excess of prolixity and of solemnity, can it be really contended that in purely poetic quality—in aerial freedom and space, in radiant purity of light or depth and variety of colour, in penetrating and subtle sweetness of music, in supple mastery of the instrument, in vivid spontaneity of imagination, in clean-cut sureness of touch—Wordsworth is not surpassed by men who were below him in weight and greatness? Even in his own field of the simple and the pastoral has he touched so sweet and spontaneous a note as Burns's *Daisy*, or the *Mouse?* When men seek immersion or absorption in the atmosphere of pure poesy, without lesson or moral, or anything but delight of fancy and stir of imagination, they will find him less congenial to their mood than poets not worthy to loose the latchet of his shoe in the greater elements of his art. In all these comparisons, it is not merely Wordsworth's theme and motive and dominant note that are different; the skill of hand is different, and the musical ear and the imaginative eye.

To maintain or to admit so much as this, however, is not to say the last word. The question is whether Wordsworth, however unequal to Shelley in lyric quality, to Coleridge or to Keats in imaginative quality, to Burns in tenderness, warmth, and that humour which is so nearly akin to pathos, to Byron in vividness and energy, yet possesses excellences of his own which place him in other respects above these master-spirits of his time. If the question is to be answered affirmatively, it is clear that only in one direction must we look. The trait that really places Wordsworth on an eminence above his poetic contemporaries, and ranks him, as the ages are likely to rank him, on a line just short of the greatest of all time, is his direct appeal to will and conduct. "There is volition and self-government in every line of his poetry, and his best thoughts come from his steady resistance to the ebb and flow of ordinary desires and regrets. He contests the ground inch by inch with all despondent and indolent humours, and often, too, with movements of inconsiderate and wasteful joy." (*R. H. Hutton.*) That would seem to be his true distinction and superiority over men to whom more had been given of fire, passion, and ravishing music. Those who deem the end of poetry to be intoxication, fever, or rainbow dreams, can care little for Wordsworth. If its end be not intoxication, but on the contrary a search from the wide regions of imagination and feeling, for elements of composure deep and pure, and of self-government in a far loftier sense than the merely prudential, then Wordsworth has a gift of his own in which he was approached by no poet of his time. Scott's sane and humane genius, with much the same aims, yet worked with different methods. He once remonstrated with Lockhart for being too apt to measure things by some reference to literature. "I have read books enough," said Scott, "and observed and conversed with enough of eminent and splendidly cultivated minds; but I assure you, I have heard higher sentiments from the lips of poor uneducated men and women, when exerting the spirit of severe yet gentle heroism under difficulties and afflictions, or speaking their simple thoughts as to circumstances in the lot of friends and neighbours, than I ever yet met with out of the pages of the Bible. We shall never learn to respect our real calling and destiny, unless we have taught ourselves to consider everything as moonshine compared with the education of the heart." This admirable deliverance of Scott's is, so far as it goes, eminently Wordsworthian; but Wordsworth went higher and further, striving not only to move the sympathies of the heart, but to enlarge the understanding, and exalt and widen the spiritual vision, all with the aim of leading us towards firmer and austerer self-control.

Certain favourers of Wordsworth answer our question with a triumphant affirmative, on the strength of some ethical, or metaphysical, or theological system which they believe themselves to find in him. But is it credible that poets can permanently live by systems? Or is not system, whether ethical, theological, or philosophical, the heavy lead of poetry? Lucretius is indisputably one of the mighty poets of the world, but Epicureanism is not the soul of that majestic muse. So with Wordsworth. Thought is, on the whole, predominant over feeling in his verse, but a prevailing atmosphere of deep and solemn reflection does not make a system. His theology and his ethics, and his so-called Platonical metaphysics, have as little to do with the power of his poetry over us, as the imputed Arianism or any other aspect of the theology of *Paradise Lost* has to do with the strength and the sublimity of Milton, and his claim to a high perpetual place in the hearts of men. It is best to be entirely sceptical as to the existence of system and ordered philosophy in Wordsworth. When he tells us that "one impulse from a vernal wood may teach you more of man, of moral evil and of good, than all the sages can," such a proposition cannot be seriously taken as more than a half-playful sally for the benefit of some too bookish friend. No impulse from a vernal wood can teach us anything at all of moral evil and of good. When he says that it is his faith, "that every flower enjoys the air it breathes," and that when the budding twigs spread out their fan to catch the air, he is compelled to think "that there was pleasure there," he expresses a charming poetic fancy and no more, and it is idle to pretend to see in it the fountain of a system of philosophy. In the famous *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, the poet doubtless does point to a set of philosophic ideas, more or less complete; but the thought from which he sets out, that our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting, and that we are less and less able to perceive the visionary gleam, less and less alive to the glory and the dream of external nature, as infancy recedes farther from us, is, with all respect for the declaration of Mr. Ruskin to the contrary, contrary to notorious fact, experience, and truth. It is a beggarly conception, no doubt, to judge as if poetry should always be capable of a prose rendering; but it is at least fatal to the philosophic pretension of a line or a stanza if, when it is fairly reduced to prose, the prose discloses that it is nonsense, and there is at least one stanza of the great *Ode* that this doom would assuredly await. Wordsworth's claim, his special gift, his lasting contribution, lies in the extraordinary strenuousness, sincerity, and insight with which he first idealises and glorifies the vast universe around us, and then makes of it, not a theatre on which men play their parts, but an animate presence, intermingling with our works, pouring its companionable spirit about us, and "breathing grandeur upon the very humblest face of human life." This twofold and conjoint performance, consciously and expressly—perhaps only too consciously—undertaken by a man of strong inborn sensibility to natural impressions, and systematically carried out in a lifetime of brooding meditation and active composition, is Wordsworth's distinguishing title to fame and gratitude. In "words that speak of nothing more than what we are," he revealed new faces of nature; he dwelt on men as they are men themselves, he strove to do that which has been declared to be the true secret of force in art, to make the trivial serve the expression of the sublime. "Wordsworth's distinctive work," Mr. Ruskin has justly said (*Modern Painters*, iii. 293), "was a war with pomp and pretence, and a display of the majesty of simple feelings and humble hearts, together with high reflective truths in his analysis of the courses of policies and ways of men; without these his love of nature would have been comparatively worthless."

Yet let us not forget that he possessed the gift which to an artist is the very root of the matter. He saw nature truly, he saw her as she is, and with his own eyes. The critic whom I have just quoted boldly pronounces him "the keenest eyed of all modern poets for what is deep and essential in nature." When he describes the daisy, casting the beauty of its star-shaped shadow on the smooth stone, or the boundless depth of the abysses of the sky, or the clouds made vivid as fire by the rays of light, every touch is true, not the copying of a literary phrase, but the result of direct observation.

It is true that Nature has sides to which Wordsworth was not energetically alive—Nature "red in tooth and claw." He was not energetically alive to the blind and remorseless cruelties of life and the world. When in early spring he heard the blended notes of the birds, and saw the budding twigs and primrose tufts, it grieved him amid such fair works of nature, to think "what man has made of man." As if nature itself, excluding the conscious doings of that portion of nature which is the human race, and excluding also nature's own share in the making of poor Man, did not abound in raking cruelties and horrors of her own. "*Edel sei der Mensch*," sang Goethe in a noble psalm, "*Hülfreich und gut, denn das allein unterscheidet ihn, Von allen Wesen die wir kennen.*" "*Let man be noble, helpful, and good, for that alone distinguishes him from all beings that we know. No feeling has nature: to good and bad gives the sun his light, and for the evildoer as for the best shine moon and stars.*" That the laws which nature has fixed for our lives are mighty and eternal, Wordsworth comprehended as fully as Goethe, but not that they are laws pitiless as iron. Wordsworth had not rooted in him the sense of Fate—of the inexorable sequences of things, of the terrible chain that so often binds an awful end to some slight and trivial beginning.

This optimism or complacency in Wordsworth will be understood if we compare his spirit and treatment with that of the illustrious French painter whose subjects and whose life were in some ways akin to his own. Millet, like Wordsworth, went to the realities of humble life for his inspiration. The peasant of the great French plains and the forest was to him what the Cumbrian dalesman was to Wordsworth. But he saw the peasant differently. "You watch figures in the fields," said Millet, "digging and delving with spade or pick. You see one of them from time to time straightening his loins, and wiping his face with the back of his hand. Thou shalt eat thy bread in the sweat of thy brow. Is that the gay lively labour in which some people would have you believe? Yet it is there that for me you must seek true humanity and great poetry. They say that I deny the charm of the country; I find in it far more than charms, I find infinite splendours. I see in it, just as they do, the little flowers of which Christ said that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them. I see clearly enough the sun as he spreads his splendour amid the clouds. None the less do I see on the plain, all smoking, the horses at the plough. I see in some stony corner a man all worn out, whose *han han* have been heard ever since daybreak—trying to straighten himself a moment to get breath." The hardness, the weariness, the sadness, the ugliness, out of which Millet's consummate skill made pictures that affect us like strange music, were to Wordsworth not the real part of the thing. They were all absorbed in the thought of nature as a whole, wonderful, mighty, harmonious, and benign.

We are not called upon to place great men of his stamp as if they were collegians in a class-list. It is best to take with thankfulness and admiration from each man what he has to give. What Wordsworth does is to assuage, to reconcile, to fortify. He has not Shakespeare's richness and vast compass, nor Milton's sublime and unflagging strength, nor Dante's severe, vivid, ardent force of vision. Probably he is too deficient in clear beauty of form and in concentrated power to be classed by the ages among these great giants. We cannot be sure. We may leave it to the ages to decide. But Wordsworth, at any rate, by his secret of bringing the infinite into common life, as he evokes it out of common life, has the skill to lead us, so long as we yield ourselves to his influence, into inner moods of settled peace, to touch "the depth and not the tumult of the soul," to give us quietness, strength, steadfastness, and purpose, whether to do or to endure. All art or poetry that has the effect of breathing into men's hearts, even if it be only for a space, these moods of settled peace, and strongly confirming their judgment and their will for good,—whatever limitations may be found besides, however prosaic may be some or much of the detail,—is great art and noble poetry, and the creator of it will always hold, as Wordsworth holds, a sovereign title to the reverence and gratitude of mankind.

J. M.

October 1888.

WORDSWORTH'S POETICAL WORKS

LINES

WRITTEN AS A SCHOOL EXERCISE AT HAWKSHEAD, ANNO ÆTATIS 14

"AND has the Sun his flaming chariot driven
Two hundred times around the ring of heaven,
Since Science first, with all her sacred train,
Beneath yon roof began her heavenly reign?
While thus I mused, methought, before mine eyes,
The Power of EDUCATION seemed to rise;
Not she whose rigid precepts trained the boy
Dead to the sense of every finer joy;
Nor that vile wretch who bade the tender age
Spurn Reason's law and humour Passion's rage;
But she who trains the generous British youth
In the bright paths of fair majestic Truth:
Emerging slow from Academus' grove
In heavenly majesty she seemed to move.
Stern was her forehead, but a smile serene
'Softened the terrors of her awful mien.'
Close at her side were all the powers, designed
To curb, exalt, reform the tender mind:
With panting breast, now pale as winter snows,
Now flushed as Hebe, Emulation rose;
Shame followed after with reverted eye,
And hue far deeper than the Tyrian dye;
Last Industry appeared with steady pace,
A smile sat beaming on her pensive face.
I gazed upon the visionary train,
Threw back my eyes, returned, and gazed again.
When lo! the heavenly goddess thus began,
Through all my frame the pleasing accents ran.

"'When Superstition left the golden light
And fled indignant to the shades of night;
When pure Religion reared the peaceful breast
And lulled the warring passions into rest,
Drove far away the savage thoughts that roll
In the dark mansions of the bigot's soul,
Enlivening Hope displayed her cheerful ray,
And beamed on Britain's sons a brighter day;
So when on Ocean's face the storm subsides,
Hushed are the winds and silent are the tides;
The God of day, in all the pomp of light,
Moves through the vault of heaven, and dissipates the night;
Wide o'er the main a trembling lustre plays,
The glittering waves reflect the dazzling blaze
Science with joy saw Superstition fly
Before the lustre of Religion's eye;
With rapture she beheld Britannia smile,
Clapped her strong wings, and sought the cheerful isle,
The shades of night no more the soul involve,
She sheds her beam, and, lo! the shades dissolve;
No jarring monks, to gloomy cell confined,
With mazy rules perplex the weary mind;
No shadowy forms entice the soul aside,
Secure she walks. Philosophy her guide.

Britain, who long her warriors had adored,
And deemed all merit centred in the sword;
Britain, who thought to stain the field was fame,
Now honoured Edward's less than Bacon's name.
Her sons no more in listed fields advance
To ride the ring, or toss the beamy lance;
No longer steel their indurated hearts
To the mild influence of the finer arts;
Quick to the secret grotto they retire
To court majestic truth, or wake the golden lyre;
By generous Emulation taught to rise,
The seats of learning brave the distant skies.
Then noble Sandys, inspired with great design,
Reared Hawkshead's happy roof, and called it mine.
There have I loved to show the tender age
The golden precepts of the classic page;
To lead the mind to those Elysian plains
Where, throned in gold, immortal Science reigns;
Fair to the view is sacred Truth displayed,
In all the majesty of light arrayed,
To teach, on rapid wings, the curious soul
To roam from heaven to heaven, from pole to pole,
From thence to search the mystic cause of things
And follow Nature to her secret springs;
Nor less to guide the fluctuating youth
Firm in the sacred paths of moral truth,
To regulate the mind's disordered frame,
And quench the passions kindling into flame;
The glimmering fires of Virtue to enlarge,
And purge from Vice's dross my tender charge.
Oft have I said, the paths of Fame pursue,
And all that Virtue dictates, dare to do;
Go to the world, peruse the book of man,
And learn from thence thy own defects to scan;
Severely honest, break no plighted trust,
But coldly rest not here—be more than just;
Join to the rigours of the sires of Rome
The gentler manners of the private dome;
When Virtue weeps in agony of woe,
Teach from the heart the tender tear to flow;
If Pleasure's soothing song thy soul entice,
Or all the gaudy pomp of splendid Vice,
Arise superior to the Siren's power,
The wretch, the short-lived vision of an hour;
Soon fades her cheek, her blushing beauties fly,
As fades the chequered bow that paints the sky,
So shall thy sire, whilst hope his breast inspires,
And wakes anew life's glimmering trembling fires,
Hear Britain's sons rehearse thy praise with joy,
Look up to heaven, and bless his darling boy.
If e'er these precepts quelled the passions' strife,
If e'er they smoothed the rugged walks of life,
If e'er they pointed forth the blissful way
That guides the spirit to eternal day,
Do thou, if gratitude inspire thy breast,
Spurn the soft fetters of lethargic rest.
Awake, awake! and snatch the slumbering lyre,
Let this bright morn and Sandys the song inspire.'

"I looked obedience: the celestial Fair
Smiled like the morn, and vanished into air." 1785.

EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED IN ANTICIPATION OF LEAVING SCHOOL

Written at Hawkshead. The beautiful image with which this poem concludes, suggested itself to me while I was resting in a boat along with my companions under the shade of a magnificent row of sycamores, which then extended their branches from the shore of the promontory upon which stands the ancient, and at that time the more picturesque, Hall of Coniston, the seat of the Le Flemings from very early times. The poem of which it was the conclusion was of many hundred lines, and contained thoughts and images most of which have been dispersed through my other writings.

Dear native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,

That, wheresoe'er my steps may tend,
And whensoe'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, while the Sun sinks down to rest
Far in the regions of the west,
Though to the vale no parting beam
Be given, not one memorial gleam,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose.
1786.

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH

Calm is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal:
Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain;
Oh! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.
1786?

AN EVENING WALK

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY

The young Lady to whom this was addressed was my Sister. It was composed at school, and during my two first College vacations. There is not an image in it which I have not observed; and now, in my seventy-third year, I recollect the time and place where most of them were noticed. I will confine myself to one instance:

"Waving his hat, the shepherd, from the vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,—
The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts, where his master points, the intercepted flocks."

I was an eye-witness of this for the first time while crossing the Pass of Dunmail Raise. Upon second thought, I will mention another image:

"And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
Its darkening boughs and leaves, in stronger lines."

This is feebly and imperfectly expressed, but I recollect distinctly the very spot where this first struck me. It was in the way between Hawkshead and Ambleside, and gave me extreme pleasure. The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them; and I made a resolution to supply, in some degree, the deficiency. I could not have been at that time above fourteen years of age. The description of the swans, that follows, was taken from the daily opportunities I had of observing their habits, not as confined to the gentleman's park, but in a state of nature. There were two pairs of them that divided the lake of Esthwaite and its in-and-out-flowing streams between them, never trespassing a single yard upon each other's separate domain. They were of the old magnificent species, bearing in beauty and majesty about the same relation to the Thames swan which that does to the goose. It was from the remembrance of those noble creatures I took, thirty years after, the picture of the swan which I have discarded from the poem of Dion. While I was a schoolboy, the late Mr. Curwen introduced a little fleet of those birds, but of the inferior species, to the lake of Windermere. Their principal home was about his own island; but they sailed about into remote parts of the lake, and, either from real or imagined injury done to the adjoining fields, they were got rid of at the request of the farmers and proprietors, but to the great regret of all who had become attached to them, from noticing their beauty and quiet habits. I will conclude my notice of this poem by observing that the plan of it has not been confined to a particular walk or an individual place,—a proof (of which I was unconscious at the time) of my unwillingness to submit the poetic spirit to the chains of fact and real circumstance. The country is idealised rather than described in any one of its local aspects.

General Sketch of the Lakes—Author's regret of his youth which was passed amongst them—Short description of Noon—Cascade—Noontide Retreat—Precipice and sloping Lights—Face of Nature as the Sun declines—Mountain-farm, and the Cock—Slate-quarry—Sunset—Superstition of the Country connected with that moment—Swans—Female Beggar—Twilight-sounds—Western Lights—Spirits—Night—Moonlight—Hope—Night-sounds—Conclusion.

FAR from my dearest Friend, 'tis mine to rove
Through bare grey dell, high wood, and pastoral cove;
Where Derwent rests, and listens to the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore;
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedge-rows, and to emerald meads;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds;
Where, undisturbed by winds, Winander[1] sleeps
'Mid clustering isles, and holly-sprinkled steeps;
Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.
  Fair scenes, erewhile, I taught, a happy child,
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild:
The spirit sought not then, in cherished sadness,
A cloudy substitute for failing gladness.
In youth's keen eye the livelong day was bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars at night,
Alike, when first the bittern's hollow bill
Was heard, or woodcocks[2] roamed the moonlight hill.
  In thoughtless gaiety I coursed the plain,
And hope itself was all I knew of pain;
For then, the inexperienced heart would beat
At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
And wild Impatience, pointing upward, showed,
Through passes yet unreached, a brighter road.
Alas! the idle tale of man is found
Depicted in the dial's moral round;
Hope with reflection blends her social rays
To gild the total tablet of his days;
Yet still, the sport of some malignant power,
He knows but from its shade the present hour.
  But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain?
To show what pleasures yet to me remain,
Say, will my Friend, with unreluctant ear,
The history of a poet's evening hear?
  When, in the south, the wan noon, brooding still,
Breathed a pale steam around the glaring hill,
And shades of deep-embattled clouds were seen,
Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between;
When crowding cattle, checked by rails that make
A fence far stretched into the shallow lake,
Lashed the cool water with their restless tails,
Or from high points of rock looked out for fanning gales:
When school-boys stretched their length upon the green;
And round the broad-spread oak, a glimmering scene,
In the rough fern-clad park, the herded deer
Shook the still-twinkling tail and glancing ear;
When horses in the sunburnt intake[3] stood,
And vainly eyed below the tempting flood,
Or tracked the passenger, in mute distress,
With forward neck the closing gate to press—
Then, while I wandered where the huddling rill
Brightens with water-breaks the hollow ghyll[4]
As by enchantment, an obscure retreat
Opened at once, and stayed my devious feet.
While thick above the rill the branches close,
In rocky basin its wild waves repose,
Inverted shrubs, and moss of gloomy green,
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between;

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[1] These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.

[2] In the beginning of winter, these mountains are frequented by woodcocks, which in dark nights retire into the woods.

[3] The word *intake* is local, and signifies a mountain-inclosure.

[4] Ghyll is also, I believe, a term confined to this country: ghyll, and dingle, have the same meaning.

And its own twilight softens the whole scene,
Save where aloft the subtle sunbeams shine
On withered briars that o'er the crags recline;
Save where, with sparkling foam, a small cascade
Illumines, from within, the leafy shade;
Beyond, along the vista of the brook,
Where antique roots its bustling course o'erlook,
The eye reposes on a secret bridge[1]
Half grey, half shagged with ivy to its ridge;
There, bending o'er the stream, the listless swain
Lingers behind his disappearing wain.
—Did Sabine grace adorn my living line,
Blandusia's praise, wild stream, should yield to thine!
Never shall ruthless minister of death
'Mid thy soft glooms the glittering steel unsheath;
No goblets shall, for thee, be crowned with flowers,
No kid with piteous outcry thrill thy bowers;
The mystic shapes that by thy margin rove
A more benignant sacrifice approve—
A mind, that, in a calm angelic mood
Of happy wisdom, meditating good,
Beholds, of all from her high powers required,
Much done, and much designed, and more desired,—
Harmonious thoughts, a soul by truth refined,
Entire affection for all human kind.
  Dear Brook, farewell! To-morrow's noon again
Shall hide me, wooing long thy wildwood strain;
But now the sun has gained his western road,
And eve's mild hour invites my steps abroad.
  While, near the midway cliff, the silvered kite
In many a whistling circle wheels her flight;
Slant watery lights, from parting clouds, apace
Travel along the precipice's base;
Cheering its naked waste of scattered stone,
By lichens grey, and scanty moss, o'ergrown;
Where scarce the foxglove peeps, or thistle's beard;
And restless stone-chat, all day long, is heard.
  How pleasant, as the sun declines, to view
The spacious landscape change in form and hue!
Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood;
There, objects, by the searching beams betrayed,
Come forth, and here retire in purple shade;
Even the white stems of birch, the cottage white,
Soften their glare before the mellow light;
The skiffs, at anchor where with umbrage wide
Yon chestnuts half the latticed boat-house hide,
Shed from their sides, that face the sun's slant beam,
Strong flakes of radiance on the tremulous stream:
Raised by yon travelling flock, a dusty cloud
Mounts from the road, and spreads its moving shroud;
The shepherd, all involved in wreaths of fire,
Now shows a shadowy speck, and now is lost entire.
  Into a gradual calm the breezes sink,
A blue rim borders all the lake's still brink;
There doth the twinkling aspen's foliage sleep,
And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy deep:
And now, on every side, the surface breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening streaks;
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble bright
With thousand thousand twinkling points of light;
There, waves that, hardly weltering, die away,
Tip their smooth ridges with a softer ray;
And now the whole wide lake in deep repose
Is hushed, and like a burnished mirror glows,

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[1] The reader who has made the tour of this country, will recognise, in this description, the features which characterise the lower waterfall in the grounds of Rydal.

Save where, along the shady western marge,
Coasts, with industrious oar, the charcoal barge.
Their panniered train a group of potters goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep road;
The peasant, from yon cliff of fearful edge
Shot, down the headlong path darts with his sledge;
Bright beams the lonely mountain-horse illume
Feeding 'mid purple heath, "green rings,"[1] and broom;
While the sharp slope the slackened team confounds,
Downward the ponderous timber-wain resounds;
In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
Dashed o'er the rough rock, lightly leaps along;
From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet,
Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat;
Sounds from the water-side the hammered boat;
And *blasted* quarry thunders, heard remote!
Even here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs, and falling floods,
Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
Found by the grassy door of mountain-farms.
Sweetly ferocious,[2] round his native walks,
Pride of his sister-wives, the monarch stalks;
Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread;
A crest of purple tops the warrior's head.
Bright sparks his black and rolling eye-ball hurls
Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
On tiptoe reared, he strains his clarion throat,
Threatened by faintly-answering farms remote:
Again with his shrill voice the mountain rings,
While, flapped with conscious pride, resound his wings.
Where, mixed with graceful birch, the sombrous pine
And yew-tree o'er the silver rocks recline;
I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
Dwarf panniered steeds, and men, and numerous wains;
How busy all the enormous hive within,
While Echo dallies with its various din!
Some (hear you not their chisels' clinking sound?)
Toil, small as pigmies in the gulf profound;
Some, dim between the lofty cliffs descried,
O'erwalk the slender plank from side to side;
These, by the pale-blue rocks that ceaseless ring,
In airy baskets hanging, work and sing.
Just where a cloud above the mountain rears
An edge all flame, the broadening sun appears;
A long blue bar its ægis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of its golden tides;
And now that orb has touched the purple steep
Whose softened image penetrates the deep.
'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
With towers and woods, a "prospect all on fire;"
While coves and secret hollows, through a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam betray.
Each slip of lawn the broken rocks between
Shines in the light with more than earthly green:
Deep yellow beams the scattered stems illume,
Far in the level forest's central gloom:
Waving his hat, the shepherd, from the vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,—
The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts, where his master points, the intercepted flocks.
Where oaks o'erhang the road the radiance shoots
On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots;
The druid-stones a brightened ring unfold;
And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold;
Sunk to a curve, the day-star lessens still,

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[1] "Vivid rings of green."—GREENWOOD'S POEM ON SHOOTING.

[2] "Dolcemente feroce."—TASSO. In this description of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the same animal in *L'Agriculture, ou Les Géorgiques François*, of M. Rossuet.

Gives one bright glance, and drops behind the hill.[1]
In these secluded vales, if village fame,
Confirmed by hoary hairs, belief may claim;
When up the hills, as now, retired the light,
Strange apparitions mocked the shepherd's sight.
The form appears of one that spurs his steed
Midway along the hill with desperate speed;
Unhurt pursues his lengthened flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, appears a brave, a gorgeous show
Of horsemen-shadows moving to and fro;
At intervals imperial banners stream,
And now the van reflects the solar beam;
The rear through iron brown betrays a sullen gleam.
While silent stands the admiring crowd below,
Silent the visionary warriors go,
Winding in ordered pomp their upward way[2]
Till the last banner of the long array
Has disappeared, and every trace is fled
Of splendour—save the beacon's spiry head
Tipt with eve's latest gleam of burning red.
Now, while the solemn evening shadows sail,
On slowly-waving pinions, down the vale;
And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
Its darkening boughs and leaves, in stronger lines;
'Tis pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray
Where, winding on along some secret bay,
The swan uplifts his chest, and backward flings
His neck, a varying arch, between his towering wings:
The eye that marks the gliding creature sees
How graceful, pride can be, and how majestic, ease.
While tender cares and mild domestic loves
With furtive watch pursue her as she moves,
The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little-ones around her leads,
Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating grass.
She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgetting, calls the wearied to her side;
Alternately they mount her back, and rest
Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.
Long may they float upon this flood serene;
Theirs be these holms untrodden, still, and green,
Where leafy shades fence off the blustering gale,
And breathes in peace the lily of the vale!
Yon isle, which feels not even the milkmaid's feet,
Yet hears her song, "by distance made more sweet,"
Yon isle conceals their home, their hut-like bower;
Green water-rushes overspread the floor;
Long grass and willows form the woven wall,
And swings above the roof the poplar tall.
Thence issuing often with unwieldy stalk,
They crush with broad black feet their flowery walk;
Or, from the neighbouring water, hear at morn
The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow horn;
Involve their serpent-necks in changeful rings,
Rolled wantonly between their slippery wings,
Or, starting up with noise and rude delight,
Force half upon the wave their cumbrous flight.
Fair Swan! by all a mother's joys caressed,
Haply some wretch has eyed, and called thee blessed;
When with her infants, from some shady seat
By the lake's edge, she rose—to face the noontide heat;
Or taught their limbs along the dusty road
A few short steps to totter with their load.
I see her now, denied to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed,
Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to the gliding moon on high.
—When low-hung clouds each star of summer hide,
And fireless are the valleys far and wide,

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[1] From Thomson.

[2] See a description of an appearance of this kind in Clark's Survey of the Lakes, accompanied by vouchers of its veracity, that may amuse the reader.

Where the brook brawls along the public road
Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching broad,
Oft has she taught them on her lap to lay
The shining glow-worm ; or, in heedless play,
Toss it from hand to hand, disquieted ;
While others, not unseen, are free to shed
Green unmolested light upon their mossy bed.
  Oh ! when the sleety showers her path assail,
And like a torrent roars the headstrong gale ;
No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold,
Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold ;
Weak roof a cowering form two babes to shield,
And faint the fire a dying heart can yield !
Press the sad kiss, fond mother ! vainly fears
Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears ;
No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
Thy breast their death-bed, coffined in thine arms !
  Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,
Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
Wetting, that drip upon the water still ;
And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.
  Now, with religious awe, the farewell light
Blends with the solemn colouring of night ;
'Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain's brow,
And round the west's proud lodge their shadows throw,
Like Una shining on her gloomy way,
The half-seen form of Twilight roams astray ;
Shedding, through paly loop-holes mild and small,
Gleams that upon the lake's still bosom fall ;
Soft o'er the surface creep those lustres pale
Tracking the motions of the fitful gale.
With restless interchange at once the bright
Wins on the shade, the shade upon the light.
No favoured eye was e'er allowed to gaze
On lovelier spectacle in faery days ;
When gentle Spirits urged a sportive chase,
Brushing with lucid wands the water's face :
While music, stealing round the glimmering deeps,
Charmed the tall circle of the enchanted steeps.
—The lights are vanished from the watery plains :
No wreck of all the pageantry remains.
Unheeded night has overcome the vales :
On the dark earth the wearied vision fails ;
The latest lingerer of the forest train,
The lone black fir, forsakes the faded plain ;
Last evening sight, the cottage smoke, no more,
Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers hoar ;
And, towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain-steeps appear.
—Now o'er the soothed accordant heart we feel
A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,
And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
The soft gloom deepening on the tranquil mind.
Stay ! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay !
Ah no ! as fades the vale, they fade away :
Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains ;
Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear retains.
  The bird, who ceased, with fading light, to thread
Silent the hedge or steamy rivulet's bed,
From his grey re-appearing tower shall soon
Salute with gladsome note the rising moon,
While with a hoary light she frosts the ground,
And pours a deeper blue to Æther's bound ;

Pleased, as she moves, her pomp of clouds to fold
In robes of azure, fleecy-white, and gold.
Above yon eastern hill, where darkness broods
O'er all its vanished dells, and lawns, and woods;
Where but a mass of shade the sight can trace,
Even now she shews, half-veiled, her lovely face:
Across the gloomy valley flings her light,
Far to the western slopes with hamlets white;
And gives, where woods the chequered upland strew,
To the green corn of summer, autumn's hue.
Thus Hope, first pouring from her blessed horn
Her dawn, far lovelier than the moon's own morn,
Till higher mounted, strives in vain to cheer
The weary hills, impervious, blackening near;
Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the while
On darling spots remote her tempting smile.
Even now she decks for me a distant scene,
(For dark and broad the gulf of time between)
Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
(Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way;
How fair its lawns and sheltering woods appear!
How sweet its streamlet murmurs in mine ear!)
Where we, my Friend, to happy days shall rise,
Till our small share of hardly-paining sighs
(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hushed into the tranquil breast of death.
But now the clear bright Moon her zenith gains,
And, rimy without speck, extend the plains:
The deepest cleft the mountain's front displays
Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays;
From the dark-blue faint silvery threads divide
The hills, while gleams below the azure tide;
Time softly treads; throughout the landscape breathes
A peace enlivened, not disturbed, by wreaths
Of charcoal-smoke, that o'er the fallen wood,
Steal down the hill, and spread along the flood.
The song of mountain-streams, unheard by day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
Air listens, like the sleeping water, still,
To catch the spiritual music of the hill,
Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferry-man from sleep,
The echoed hoof nearing the distant shore,
The boat's first motion—made with dashing oar;
Sound of closed gate, across the water borne,
Hurrying the timid hare through rustling corn;
The sportive outcry of the mocking owl;
And at long intervals the mill-dog's howl;
The distant forge's swinging thump profound;
Or yell, in the deep woods, of lonely hound.

1787, 8, & 9.

LINES

WRITTEN WHILE SAILING IN A BOAT AT EVENING

This title is scarcely correct. It was during a solitary walk on the banks of the Cam that I was first struck with this appearance, and applied it to my own feelings in the manner here expressed, changing the scene to the Thames, near Windsor. This, and the three stanzas of the following poem, "Remembrance of Collins," formed one piece; but, upon the recommendation of Coleridge, the three last stanzas were separated from the other.

How richly glows the water's breast
Before us, tinged with evening hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent course pursues!
And see how dark the backward stream!
A little moment past so smiling!

And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
Some other loiterers beguiling.

Such views the youthful Bard allure;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colours shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.
—And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow!
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to-morrow?
1789.

REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS

COMPOSED UPON THE THAMES NEAR RICHMOND

GLIDE gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river! come to me.
O glide, fair stream! for ever so,
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought!—Yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene!
Such as did once the Poet bless,
Who murmuring here a later[1] ditty,
Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

Now let us, as we float along,
For *him* suspend the dashing oar;
And pray that never child of song
May know that Poet's sorrows more.
How calm! how still! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended!
—The evening darkness gathers round
By virtue's holiest Powers attended.
1789.

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[1] Collins's Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his life-time. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

TAKEN DURING A PEDESTRIAN TOUR AMONG THE ALPS

Much the greatest part of this poem was composed during my walks upon the banks of the Loire in the years 1791, 1792. I will only notice that the description of the valley filled with mist, beginning—"In solemn shapes," was taken from that beautiful region of which the principal features are Lungarn and Sarnen. Nothing that I ever saw in nature left a more delightful impression on my mind than that which I have attempted, alas! how feebly, to convey to others in these lines. Those two lakes have always interested me especially, from bearing, in their size and other features, a resemblance to those of the North of England. It is much to be deplored that a district so beautiful should be so unhealthy as it is.

TO

THE REV. ROBERT JONES,

FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

DEAR SIR,

However desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of our having been companions among the Alps, seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.

In inscribing this little work to you, I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post-chaise, and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessaries upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter!

I am happy in being conscious that I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments to which you can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together; consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the feature of your native mountains, through which we hav wandered together, in the same manner, with s much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets, which giv such splendour to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethgelert, Menai and her Druids, the Alpine steeps of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee, remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem

I am, dear Sir,
Most sincerely yours,
W. WORDSWORTH.

London, 1793.

Happiness (if she had been to be found on earth) among the charms of Nature—Pleasures of the pedestrian Traveller—Author crosses France to the Alps—Present state of the Grande Chartreuse—Lake of Como—Time, Sunset—Same Scene, Twilight—Same Scene, Morning; its voluptuous Character; Old man and forest-cottage music—River Tusa—Via Mala and Grison Gipsy—Sckellenen-thal—Lake of Uri—Stormy sunset—Chapel of William Tell—Force of local emotion—Chamois-chaser—View of the higher Alps—Manner of life of a Swiss mountaineer, interspersed with views of the higher Alps—Golden age of the Alps—Life and views continued—Ranz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air—Abbey of Einsiedlen and its pilgrims—Valley of Chamouny—Mont Blanc—Slavery of Savoy—Influence of liberty on cottage-happiness—France—Wish for the Extirpation of slavery—Conclusion.

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground
Where from distress a refuge might be found,
And solitude prepare the soul for heaven;
Sure, nature's God that spot to man had given
Where falls the purple morning far and wide
In flakes of light upon the mountain side;
Where with loud voice the power of water shakes
The leafy wood, or sleeps in quiet lakes.
Yet not unrecompensed the man shall roam,
Who at the call of summer quits his home,
And plods through some wide realm o'er vale and height,
Though seeking only holiday delight;
At least, not owning to himself an aim
To which the sage would give a prouder name.
No gains too cheaply earned his fancy cloy,
Though every passing zephyr whispers joy;
Brisk toil, alternating with ready ease,
Feeds the clear current of his sympathies.
For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn;
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn!
Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the velvet green-sward to his tread:
Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye?
Upward he looks—"and calls it luxury:"
Kind Nature's charities his steps attend;
In every babbling brook he finds a friend;
While chastening thoughts of sweetest use, bestowed
By wisdom, moralise his pensive road.
Host of his welcome inn, the noon-tide bower,
To his spare meal he calls the passing poor;
He views the sun uplift his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's lyre;[1]
Blesses the moon that comes with kindly ray,
To light him shaken by his rugged way.
Back from his sight no bashful children steal;
He sits a brother at the cottage-meal;
His humble looks no shy restraint impart;
Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
The maidens eye him with enquiring glance,
Much wondering by what fit of crazing care,
Or desperate love, bewildered, he came there.
A hope, that prudence could not then approve,
That clung to Nature with a truant's love,
O'er Gallia's wastes of corn my footsteps led;
Her files of road-elms, high above my head
In long-drawn vista, rustling in the breeze;
Or where her pathways straggle as they please
By lonely farms and secret villages.
But lo! the Alps ascending white in air,
Toy with the sun and glitter from afar.
And now, emerging from the forest's gloom,
I greet thee, Chartreuse, while I mourn thy doom.

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[1] The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or cheerful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

Whither is fled that Power whose frown severe
Awed sober Reason till she crouched in fear?
That Silence, once in deathlike fetters bound,
Chains that were loosened only by the sound
Of holy rites chanted in measured round?
—The voice of blasphemy the fane alarms,
The cloister startles at the gleam of arms.
The thundering tube the aged angler hears,
Bent o'er the groaning flood that sweeps away his tears.
Cloud-piercing pine-trees nod their troubled heads,
Spires, rocks, and lawns a browner night o'erspreads;
Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
And start the astonished shades at female eyes.
From Bruno's forest screams the affrighted jay,
And slow the insulted eagle wheels away.
A viewless flight of laughing Demons mock
The Cross, by angels planted[1] on the aërial rock.
The "parting Genius" sighs with hollow breath
Along the mystic streams of Life and Death.[2]
Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
Portentous through her old woods' trackless bounds,
Vallombre,[3] 'mid her falling fanes, deplores,
For ever broke, the sabbath of her bowers.
 More pleased, my foot the hidden margin roves
Of Como, bosomed deep in chestnut groves.
No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
Tower, bare or sylvan, from the narrow deeps.
—To towns, whose shades of no rude noise complain,
From ringing team apart and grating wain—
To flat-roofed towns, that touch the water's bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
Or, from the bending rocks, obtrusive cling,
And o'er the whitened wave their shadows fling—
The pathway leads, as round the steeps it twines;
And Silence loves its purple roof of vines.
The loitering traveller hence, at evening, sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
Or marks, 'mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maids
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades;
Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
Stretch o'er the pictured mirror broad and blue,
And track the yellow lights from steep to steep,
As up the opposing hills they slowly creep.
Aloft, here, half a village shines, arrayed
In golden light; half hides itself in shade:
While, from amid the darkened roofs, the spire,
Restlessly flashing, seems to mount like fire:
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the lake below.
Slow glides the sail along the illumined shore,
And steals into the shade the lazy oar;
Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
And ambrous music on the water dies.
 How blest, delicious scene! the eye that greets
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;
Beholds the unwearied sweep of wood that scales
Thy cliffs; the endless waters of thy vales;
Thy lowly cots that sprinkle all the shore,
Each with its household boat beside the door;
Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky;
Thy towns, that cleave, like swallows' nests, on high;
That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descried
Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
Whence lutes and voices down the enchanted woods
Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods;
Thy lake, that, streaked or dappled, blue or grey,
'Mid smoking woods gleams hid from morning's ray

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[1] Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.

[2] Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.

[3] Name of one of the valleys of the Chartreuse.

Slow-travelling down the western hills, to enfold
Its green-tinged margin in a blaze of gold;
Thy glittering steeples, whence the matin bell
Calls forth the woodman from his desert cell,
And quickens the blithe sound of oars that pass
Along the steaming lake, to early mass.
But now farewell to each and all—adieu
To every charm, and last and chief to you,
Ye lovely maidens that in noontide shade
Rest near your little plots of wheaten glade;
To all that binds the soul in powerless trance,
Lip-dewing song, and ringlet-tossing dance;
Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illume
The sylvan cabin's lute-enlivened gloom.
—Alas! the very murmur of the streams
Breathes o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams,
While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
Her shameless timbrel shakes on Como's marge,
And lures from bay to bay the vocal barge.
Yet are thy softer arts with power indued
To soothe and cheer the poor man's solitude.
By silent cottage-doors, the peasant's home
Left vacant for the day, I loved to roam.
But once I pierced the mazes of a wood
In which a cabin undeserted stood;
There an old man an olden measure scanned
On a rude viol touched with withered hand.
As lambs or fawns in April clustering lie
Under a hoary oak's thin canopy,
Stretched at his feet, with stedfast upward eye,
His children's children listened to the sound;
—A Hermit with his family around!
But let us hence; for fair Locarno smiles
Embowered in walnut slopes and citron isles:
Or seek at eve the banks of Tusa's stream,
Where, 'mid dim towers and woods, her[1] waters gleam.
From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire
The dull-red steeps, and, darkening still, aspire
To where afar rich orange lustres glow
Round undistinguished clouds, and rocks, and snow:
Or, led where Via Mala's chasms confine
The indignant waters of the infant Rhine,
Hang o'er the abyss, whose else impervious gloom
His burning eyes with fearful light illume.
The mind condemned, without reprieve, to go
O'er life's long deserts with its charge of woe,
With sad congratulation joins the train
Where beasts and men together o'er the plain
Move on—a mighty caravan of pain:
Hope, strength, and courage, social suffering brings,
Freshening the wilderness with shades and springs.
—There be whose lot far otherwise is cast:
Sole human tenant of the piny waste,
By choice or doom a gipsy wanders here,
A nursling babe her only comforter;
Lo, where she sits beneath yon shaggy rock,
A cowering shape half hid in curling smoke!
When lightning among clouds and mountain-snows
Predominates, and darkness comes and goes,
And the fierce torrent, at the flashes broad
Starts, like a horse, beside the glaring road—
She seeks a covert from the battering shower
In the roofed bridge;[2] the bridge, in that dread hour,
Itself all trembling at the torrent's power.
Nor is she more at ease on some *still* night,
When not a star supplies the comfort of its light;
Only the waning moon hangs dull and red
Above a melancholy mountain's head,

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[1] The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the Alps by the Simplon Pass.

[2] Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood, and covered: these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.

Then sets. In total gloom the Vagrant sighs,
Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes ;
Or on her fingers counts the distant clock,
Or, to the drowsy crow of midnight cock,
Listens, or quakes while from the forest's gulf
Howls near and nearer yet the famished wolf.
From the green vale of Urseren smooth and wide
Descend we now, the maddened Reuss our guide ;
By rocks that, shutting out the blessed day,
Cling tremblingly to rocks as loose as they ;
By cells[1] upon whose image, while he prays,
The kneeling peasant scarcely dares to gaze ;
By many a votive death-cross[2] planted near,
And watered duly with the pious tear,
That faded silent from the upward eye
Unmoved with each rude form of peril nigh ;
Fixed on the anchor left by Him who saves
Alike in whelming snows, and roaring waves.
But soon a peopled region on the sight
Opens—a little world of calm delight ;
Where mists, suspended on the expiring gale,
Spread rooflike o'er the deep secluded vale,
And beams of evening slipping in between,
Gently illuminate a sober scene :—
Here, on the brown wood-cottages[3] they sleep,
There, over rock or sloping pasture creep.
On as we journey, in clear view displayed,
The still vale lengthens underneath its shade
Of low-hung vapour : on the freshened mead
The green light sparkles ;—the dim bowers recede.
While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape lull,
And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,
In solemn shapes before the admiring eye
Dilated hang the misty pines on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and towers,
And antique castles seen through gleamy showers.
From such romantic dreams, my soul, awake !
To sterner pleasure, where, by Uri's lake
In Nature's pristine majesty outspread,
Winds neither road nor path for foot to tread :
The rocks rise naked as a wall, or stretch
Far o'er the water, hung with groves of beech ;
Aërial pines from loftier steeps ascend,
Nor stop but where creation seems to end.
Yet here and there, if mid the savage scene
Appears a scanty plot of smiling green,
Up from the lake a zigzag path will creep
To reach a small wood-hut hung boldly on the steep,
—Before those thresholds (never can they know
The face of traveller passing to and fro,)
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
For whom at morning tolled the funeral bell ;
Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark foregoes,
Touched by the beggar's moan of human woes ;
The shady porch ne'er offered a cool seat
To pilgrims overcome by summer's heat.
Yet thither the world's business finds its way
At times, and tales unsought beguile the day,
And *there* are those fond thoughts which Solitude,
However stern, is powerless to exclude.
There doth the maiden watch her lover's sail
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale ;
At midnight listens till his parting oar,
And its last echo, can be heard no more.
And what if ospreys, cormorants, herons, cry
Amid tempestuous vapours driving by,
Or hovering over wastes too bleak to rear
That common growth of earth, the foodful ear ;

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[1] The Catholic religion prevails here : these cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like the Roman tombs, along the road side.

[2] Crosses, commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow, and other accidents, are very common along this dreadful road.

[3] The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.

Where the green apple shrivels on the spray,
And pines the unripened pear in summer's kindliest ray;
Contentment shares the desolate domain
With Independence, child of high Disdain.
Exulting 'mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
And grasps by fits her sword, and often eyes;
And sometimes, as from rock to rock she bounds
The Patriot nymph starts at imagined sounds,
And, wildly pausing, oft she hangs aghast,
Whether some old Swiss air hath checked her haste
Or thrill of Spartan fife is caught between the blast.
Swoln with incessant rains from hour to hour,
All day the floods a deepening murmur pour:
The sky is veiled, and every cheerful sight:
Dark is the region as with coming night;
But what a sudden burst of overpowering light!
Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the wheeling eagle's glorious form!
Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
The wood-crowned cliffs that o'er the lake recline;
Those lofty cliffs a hundred streams unfold,
At once to pillars turned that flame with gold:
Behind his sail the peasant shrinks, to shun
The *west*, that burns like one dilated sun,
A crucible of mighty compass, felt
By mountains, glowing till they seem to melt.
But, lo! the boatman, overawed, before
The pictured fane of Tell suspends his oar;
Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
While his eyes sparkle with heroic tears.
And who, that walks where men of ancient days
Have wrought with godlike arm the deeds of praise,
Feels not the spirit of the place control,
Or rouse and agitate his labouring soul?
Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lulled by Alpine rills,
On Zutphen's plain; or on that highland dell,
Through which rough Garry cleaves his way, can tell
What high resolves exalt the tenderest thought
Of him whom passion rivets to the spot,
Where breathed the gale that caught Wolfe's happiest sigh,
And the last sunbeam fell on Bayard's eye;
Where bleeding Sidney from the cup retired,
And glad Dundee in "faint huzzas" expired?
But now with other mind I stand alone
Upon the summit of this naked cone,
And watch the fearless chamois-hunter chase
His prey, through tracts abrupt of desolate space,
[1] Through vacant worlds where Nature never gave
A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,
Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred keep;
Thro' worlds where Life, and Voice, and Motion sleep;
Where silent Hours their deathlike sway extend,
Save when the avalanche breaks loose, to rend
Its way with uproar, till the ruin, drowned
In some dense wood or gulf of snow profound,
Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive sound.
—'Tis his, while wandering on from height to height,
To see a planet's pomp and steady light
In the least star of scarce-appearing night;
While the pale moon moves near him, on the bound
Of ether, shining with diminished round,
And far and wide the icy summits blaze,
Rejoicing in the glory of her rays:
To him the day-star glitters small and bright,
Shorn of its beams, insufferably white,
And he can look beyond the sun, and view
Those fast-receding depths of sable blue
Flying till vision can no more pursue!
—At once bewildering mists around him close,
And cold and hunger are his least of woes;

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[1] For most of the images in the next sixteen verses, I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observations annexed to his translation of Coxe's Tour in Switzerland.

The Demon of the snow, with angry roar
Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
Soon with despair's whole weight his spirits sink;
Bread has he none, the snow must be his drink;
And, ere his eyes can close upon the day,
The eagle of the Alps o'ershades her prey.
Now couch thyself where, heard with fear afar,
Thunders through echoing pines the headlong Aar;
Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
Of pensive Underwalden's[1] pastoral heights.
—Is there who 'mid these awful wilds has seen
The native Genii walk the mountain green?
Or heard, while other worlds their charms reveal,
Soft music o'er the aërial summit steal?
While o'er the desert, answering every close,
Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and goes.
—And sure there is a secret Power that reigns
Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,
Nought but the *chalets*,[2] flat and bare, on high
Suspended 'mid the quiet of the sky;
Or distant herds that pasturing upward creep,
And, not untended, climb the dangerous steep.
How still! no irreligious sound or sight
Rouses the soul from her severe delight.
An idle voice the sabbath region fills
Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
And with that voice accords the soothing sound
Of drowsy bells, for ever tinkling round;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-woods' steady *sugh*;[3]
The solitary heifer's deepened low;
Or rumbling, heard remote, of falling snow.
All motions, sounds, and voices, far and nigh,
Blend in a music of tranquillity;
Save when, a stranger seen below, the boy
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.
When, from the sunny breast of open seas,
And bays with myrtle fringed, the southern breeze
Comes on to gladden April with the sight
Of green isles widening on each snow-clad height;
When shouts and lowing herds the valley fill,
And louder torrents stun the noon-tide hill,
The pastoral Swiss begin the cliffs to scale,
Leaving to silence the deserted vale;
And like the Patriarchs in their simple age
Move, as the verdure leads, from stage to stage:
High and more high in summer's heat they go,
And hear the rattling thunder far below;
Or steal beneath the mountains, half-deterred,
Where huge rocks tremble to the bellowing herd.
One I behold who, 'cross the foaming flood,
Leaps with a bound of graceful hardihood;
Another, high on that green ledge;—he gained
The tempting spot with every sinew strained;
And downward thence a knot of grass he throws,
Food for his beasts in time of winter snows.
—Far different life from what Tradition hoar
Transmits of happier lot in times of yore!
Then Summer lingered long; and honey flowed
From out the rocks, the wild bees' safe abode:
Continual waters welling cheered the waste,
And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste:
Nor Winter yet his frozen stores had piled,
Usurping where the fairest herbage smiled:
Nor Hunger driven the herds from pastures bare,
To climb the treacherous cliffs for scanty fare.

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[1] The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps; this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.

[2] This picture is from the middle region of the Alps. *Chalets* are summer huts for the Swiss herdsmen.

[3] Sugh, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

Then the milk-thistle flourished through the land,
And forced the full-swoln udder to demand,
Thrice every day, the pail and welcome hand.
Thus does the father to his children tell
Of banished bliss, by fancy loved too well.
Alas! that human guilt provoked the rod
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.
'Tis morn: with gold the verdant mountain glows
More high, the snowy peaks with hues of rose.
Far-stretched beneath the many-tinted hills,
A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
A solemn sea! whose billows wide around
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound:
Pines, on the coast, through mist their tops uprear,
That like to leaning masts of stranded ships appear.
A single chasm, a gulf of gloomy blue,
Gapes in the centre of the sea—and, through
That dark mysterious gulf ascending, sound
Innumerable streams with roar profound.
Mount through the nearer vapours notes of birds,
And merry flageolet; the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the heifer's tinkling bell,
Talk, laughter, and perchance a church-tower knell:
Think not, the peasant from aloft has gazed
And heard with heart unmoved, with soul unraised:
Nor is his spirit less enrapt, nor less
Alive to independent happiness,
Then, when he lies, out-stretched, at eventide
Upon the fragrant mountain's purple side:
For as the pleasures of his simple day
Beyond his native valley seldom stray,
Nought round its darling precincts can he find
But brings some past enjoyment to his mind;
While Hope, reclining upon Pleasure's urn,
Binds her wild wreaths, and whispers his return.
Once, Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was blest as free—for he was Nature's child.
He, all superior but his God disdained,
Walked none restraining, and by none restrained
Confessed no law but what his reason taught,
Did all he wished, and wished but what he ought.
As man in his primeval dower arrayed
The image of his glorious Sire displayed,
Even so, by faithful Nature guarded, here
The traces of primeval Man appear;
The simple dignity no forms debase;
The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace:
The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
His book he prizes, nor neglects his sword;
Well taught by that to feel his rights, prepared
With this "the blessings he enjoys to guard."
And, as his native hills encircle ground
For many a marvellous victory renowned,
The work of Freedom daring to oppose,
With few in arms,[1] innumerable foes,
When to those famous fields his steps are led,
An unknown power connects him with the dead:
For images of other worlds are there;
Awful the light, and holy is the air.
Fitfully, and in flashes, through his soul,
Like sun-lit tempests, troubled transports roll;
His bosom heaves, his Spirit towers amain,
Beyond the senses and their little reign.
And oft, when that dread vision hath past by,
He holds with God himself communion high,
There where the peal of swelling torrents fills
The sky-roofed temple of the eternal hills;

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[1] Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors, the house of Austria; and in particular, to one fought at Næfels near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty men are said to have defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians. Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription, 1388, the year the battle was fought, marking out, as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians, attempting to make a stand, were repulsed anew.

Or when, upon the mountain's silent brow
Reclined, he sees, above him and below,
Bright stars of ice and azure fields of snow;
While needle peaks of granite shooting bare
Tremble in ever-varying tints of air.
And when a gathering weight of shadows brown
Falls on the valleys as the sun goes down;
And Pikes, of darkness named and fear and storms,[1]
Uplift in quiet their illumined forms,
In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
Tinged like an angel's smile all rosy red—
Awe in his breast with holiest love unites,
And the near heavens impart their own delights.
When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle grows;
That hut which on the hills so oft employs
His thoughts, the central point of all his joys.
And as a swallow, at the hour of rest,
Peeps often ere she darts into her nest,
So to the homestead, where the grandsire tends
A little prattling child, he oft descends,
To glance a look upon the well-matched pair;
Till storm and driving ice blockade him there.
There, safely guarded by the woods behind,
He hears the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears Winter calling all his terrors round,
And, blest within himself, he shrinks not from the sound.
Through Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide,
Unstained by envy, discontent, and pride;
The bound of all his vanity, to deck,
With one bright bell, a favourite heifer's neck;
Well pleased upon some simple annual feast,
Remembered half the year and hoped the rest,
If dairy-produce, from his inner hoard,
Of thrice ten summers dignify the board.
—Alas! in every clime a flying ray
Is all we have to cheer our wintry way;
And here the unwilling mind may more than trace
The general sorrows of the human race;
The churlish gales of penury, that blow
Cold as the north-wind o'er a waste of snow,
To them the gentle groups of bliss deny
That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.
Yet more;—compelled by Powers which only deign
That *solitary* man disturb their reign,
Powers that support an unremitting strife
With all the tender charities of life,
Full oft the father, when his sons have grown
To manhood, seems their title to disown;
And from his nest amid the storms of heaven
Drives, eagle-like, those sons as he was driven;
With stern composure watches to the plain—
And never, eagle-like, beholds again!
When long-familiar joys are all resigned,
Why does their sad remembrance haunt the mind?
Lo! where through flat Batavia's willowy groves,
Or by the lazy Seine, the exile roves;
O'er the curled waters Alpine measures swell,
And search the affections to their inmost cell;
Sweet poison spreads along the listener's veins,
Turning past pleasures into mortal pains;
Poison, which not a frame of steel can brave,
Bows his young head with sorrow to the grave.[2]
Gay lark of hope, thy silent song resume!
Ye flattering eastern lights, once more the hills illume!
Fresh gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart, return!
Alas! the little joy to man allowed
Fades like the lustre of an evening cloud;
Or like the beauty in a flower installed,
Whose season was, and cannot be recalled.

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[1] As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror; Wetter-Horn, the pike of storms, etc. etc.

[2] The well-known effect of the famous air, called in French Ranz des Vaches, upon the Swiss troops.

Yet, when oppressed by sickness, grief, or care,
And taught that pain is pleasure's natural heir,
We still confide in more than we can know;
Death would be else the favourite friend of woe.
'Mid savage rocks, and seas of snow that shine,
Between interminable tracts of pine,
Within a temple stands an awful shrine,
By an uncertain light revealed, that falls
On the mute Image and the troubled walls.
Oh! give not me that eye of hard disdain
That views, undimmed, Einsiedlen's[1] wretched fane.
While ghastly faces through the gloom appear,
Abortive joy, and hope that works in fear;
While prayer contends with silenced agony,
Surely in other thoughts contempt may die.
If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
One flower of hope—oh, pass and leave it there!
The tall sun, pausing on an Alpine spire,
Flings o'er the wilderness a stream of fire:
Now meet we other pilgrims ere the day
Close on the remnant of their weary way;
While they are drawing toward the sacred floor
Where, so they fondly think, the worm shall gnaw no more.
How gaily murmur and how sweetly taste
The fountains[2] reared for them amid the waste!
Their thirst they slake:—they wash their toil-worn feet
And some with tears of joy each other greet.
Yes, I must see you when ye first behold
Those holy turrets tipped with evening gold,
In that glad moment will for you a sigh
Be heaved, of charitable sympathy;
In that glad moment when your hands are prest
In mute devotion on the thankful breast!
Last, let us turn to Chamouny that shields
With rocks and gloomy woods her fertile fields:
Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
And with wild flowers and blooming orchards blend;—
A scene more fair than what the Grecian feigns
Of purple lights and ever-vernal plains;
Here all the seasons revel hand in hand:
'Mid lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fanned,
They sport beneath that mountain's matchless height
That holds no commerce with the summer night.
From age to age, throughout his lonely bounds
The crash of ruin fitfully resounds;
Appalling havoc! but serene his brow,
Where daylight lingers on perpetual snow;
Glitter the stars above, and all is black below.
What marvel then if many a Wanderer sigh,
While roars the sullen Arve in anger by,
That not for thy reward, unrivalled Vale!
Waves the ripe harvest in the autumnal gale;
That thou, the slaves of slaves, art doomed to pine
And droop, while no Italian arts are thine,
To soothe or cheer, to soften or refine.
Hail Freedom! whether it was mine to stray,
With shrill winds whistling round my lonely way,
On the bleak sides of Cumbria's heath-clad moors,
Or where dank sea-weed lashes Scotland's shores;
To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breathing rose,
And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows;
Still have I found, where Tyranny prevails,
That virtue languishes and pleasure fails,
While the remotest hamlets blessings share
In thy loved presence known, and only there;
Heart-blessings—outward treasures too which the eye
Of the sun peeping through the clouds can spy,
And every passing breeze will testify.

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[1] This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholic world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.

[2] Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the Pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain.

There, to the porch, belike with jasmine bound
Or woodbine wreaths, a smoother path is wound;
The housewife there a brighter garden sees,
Where hum on busier wing her happy bees;
On infant cheeks there fresher roses blow;
And grey-haired men look up with livelier brow,—
To greet the traveller needing food and rest;
Housed for the night, or but a half-hour's guest.
And oh, fair France! though now the traveller sees
Thy three-striped banner fluctuate on the breeze;
Though martial songs have banished songs of love,
And nightingales desert the village grove,
Scared by the fife and rumbling drum's alarms,
And the short thunder, and the flash of arms;
That cease not till night falls, when far and nigh,
Sole sound, the Sourd[1] prolongs his mournful cry!
—Yet, hast thou found that Freedom spreads her power
Beyond the cottage-hearth, the cottage-door:
All nature smiles, and owns beneath her eyes
Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
Yes, as I roamed where Loiret's waters glide
Through rustling aspens heard from side to side,
When from October clouds a milder light
Fell where the blue flood rippled into white;
Methought from every cot the watchful bird
Crowed with ear-piercing power till then unheard;
Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring streams,
Rocked the charmed thought in more delightful dreams;
Chasing those pleasant dreams, the falling leaf
Awoke a fainter sense of moral grief;
The measured echo of the distant flail
Wound in more welcome cadence down the vale;
With more majestic course[2] the water rolled,
And ripening foliage shone with richer gold.
—But foes are gathering—Liberty must raise
Red on the hills her beacon's far-seen blaze;
Must bid the tocsin ring from tower to tower!—
Nearer and nearer comes the trying hour!
Rejoice, brave Land, though pride's perverted ire
Rouse hell's own aid, and wrap thy fields in fire:
Lo, from the flames a great and glorious birth;
As if a new-made heaven were hailing a new earth!
—All cannot be: the promise is too fair
For creatures doomed to breathe terrestrial air:
Yet not for this will sober reason frown
Upon that promise, nor the hope disown;
She knows that only from high aims ensue
Rich guerdons, and to them alone are due.
Great God! by whom the strifes of men are weighed
In an impartial balance, give thine aid
To the just cause; and, oh! do thou preside
Over the mighty stream now spreading wide:
So shall its waters, from the heavens supplied
In copious showers, from earth by wholesome springs,
Brood o'er the long-parched lands with Nile-like wings!
And grant that every sceptred child of clay
Who cries presumptuous, "Here the flood shall stay,"
May in its progress see thy guiding hand,
And cease the acknowledged purpose to withstand;
Or, swept in anger from the insulted shore,
Sink with his servile bands, to rise no more!
To-night, my Friend, within this humble cot
Be scorn and fear and hope alike forgot
In timely sleep; and when, at break of day,
On the tall peaks the glistening sunbeams play,
With a light heart our course we may renew,
The first whose footsteps print the mountain dew.
1793.

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[1] An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry, heard at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of the Loire.

[2] The duties upon many parts of the French rivers were so exorbitant, that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water carriage, were obliged to transport their goods by land.

GUILT AND SORROW

OR

INCIDENTS UPON SALISBURY PLAIN

Unwilling to be unnecessarily particular, I have assigned this poem to the dates 1793 and '94; but in fact much of the "Female Vagrant's" story was composed at least two years before. All that relates to her sufferings as a sailor's wife in America, and her condition of mind during her voyage home, were faithfully taken from the report made to me of her own case by a friend who had been subjected to the same trials and affected in the same way. Mr. Coleridge, when I first became acquainted with him, was so much impressed with this poem, that it would have encouraged me to publish the whole as it then stood; but the mariner's fate appeared to me so tragical as to require a treatment more subdued and yet more strictly applicable in expression than I had at first given to it. This fault was corrected nearly fifty years afterwards, when I determined to publish the whole. It may be worth while to remark, that, though the incidents of this attempt do only in a small degree produce each other, and it deviates accordingly from the general rule by which narrative pieces ought to be governed, it is not therefore wanting in continuous hold upon the mind, or in unity, which is effected by the identity of moral interest that places the two personages upon the same footing in the reader's sympathies. My rambles over many parts of Salisbury Plain put me, as mentioned in the preface, upon writing this poem, and left on my mind imaginative impressions the force of which I have felt to this day. From that district I proceeded to Bath, Bristol, and so on to the banks of the Wye, where I took again to travelling on foot. In remembrance of that part of my journey, which was in '93, I began the verses—"Five years have passed."

ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS POEM,
PUBLISHED IN 1842

Not less than one-third of the following poem, though it has from time to time been altered in the expression, was published so far back as the year 1798, under the title of "The Female Vagrant." The extract is of such length that an apology seems to be required for reprinting it here: but it was necessary to restore it to its original position, or the rest would have been unintelligible. The whole was written before the close of the year 1794, and I will detail, rather as matter of literary biography than for any other reason, the circumstances under which it was produced.

During the latter part of the summer of 1793, having passed a month in the Isle of Wight, in view of the fleet which was then preparing for sea off Portsmouth at the commencement of the war, I left the place with melancholy forebodings. The American war was still fresh in memory. The struggle which was beginning, and which many thought would be brought to a speedy close by the irresistible arms of Great Britain being added to those of the allies, I was assured in my own mind would be of long continuance, and productive of distress and misery beyond all possible calculation. This conviction was pressed upon me by having been a witness, during a long residence in revolutionary France, of the spirit which prevailed in that country. After leaving the Isle of Wight, I spent two days in wandering on foot over Salisbury Plain, which, though cultivation was then widely spread through parts of it, had upon the whole a still more impressive appearance than it now retains.

The monuments and traces of antiquity, scattered in abundance over that region, led me unavoidably to compare what we know or guess of those remote times with certain aspects of modern society, and with calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject. In those reflections, joined with particular facts that had come to my knowledge, the following stanzas originated.

In conclusion, to obviate some distraction in the minds of those who are well acquainted with Salisbury Plain, it may be proper to say, that of the features described as belonging to it, one or two are taken from other desolate parts of England.

I

A TRAVELLER on the skirt of Sarum's Plain
Pursued his vagrant way, with feet half bare;
Stooping his gait, but not as if to gain
Help from the staff he bore; for mien and air
Were hardy, though his cheek seemed worn with care
Both of the time to come, and time long fled:
Down fell in straggling locks his thin grey hair;
A coat he wore of military red
But faded, and stuck o'er with many a patch and shred.

II

While thus he journeyed, step by step led on,
He saw and passed a stately inn, full sure
That welcome in such house for him was none.
No board inscribed the needy to allure
Hung there, no bush proclaimed to old and poor
And desolate, "Here you will find a friend!"
The pendent grapes glittered above the door;—
On he must pace, perchance 'till night descend,
Where'er the dreary roads their bare white lines extend.

III

The gathering clouds grow red with stormy fire,
In streaks diverging wide and mounting high;
That inn he long had passed; the distant spire,
Which oft as he looked back had fixed his eye,
Was lost, though still he looked, in the blank sky.
Perplexed and comfortless he gazed around,
And scarce could any trace of man descry,
Save cornfields stretched and stretching without bound;
But where the sower dwelt was nowhere to be found.

IV

No tree was there, no meadow's pleasant green,
No brook to wet his lip or soothe his ear;
Long files of corn-stacks here and there were seen,
But not one dwelling-place his heart to cheer.
Some labourer, thought he, may perchance be near;
And so he sent a feeble shout—in vain;
No voice made answer, he could only hear
Winds rustling over plots of unripe grain,
Or whistling thro' thin grass along the unfurrowed plain.

V

Long had he fancied each successive slope
Concealed some cottage, whither he might turn
And rest; but now along heaven's darkening cope
The crows rushed by in eddies, homeward borne.
Thus warned he sought some shepherd's spreading thorn
Or hovel from the storm to shield his head,
But sought in vain; for now, all wild, forlorn,
And vacant, a huge waste around him spread;
The wet cold ground, he feared, must be his only bed.

VI

And be it so—for to the chill night shower
And the sharp wind his head he oft hath bared;
A Sailor he, who many a wretched hour
Hath told; for, landing after labour hard,
Full long endured in hope of just reward,
He to an armèd fleet was forced away
By seamen, who perhaps themselves had shared
Like fate; was hurried off, a helpless prey,
'Gainst all that in *his* heart, or theirs perhaps, said nay.

VII

For years the work of carnage did not cease,
And death's dire aspect daily he surveyed,
Death's minister; then came his glad release,
And hope returned, and pleasure fondly made
Her dwelling in his dreams. By Fancy's aid
The happy husband flies, his arms to throw
Round his wife's neck; the prize of victory laid
In her full lap, he sees such sweet tears flow
As if thenceforth nor pain nor trouble she could know.

VIII

Vain hope! for fraud took all that he had earned.
The lion roars and gluts his tawny brood
Even in the desert's heart; but he, returned,
Bears not to those he loves their needful food.
His home approaching, but in such a mood
That from his sight his children might have run.
He met a traveller, robbed him, shed his blood;
And when the miserable work was done
He fled, a vagrant since, the murderer's fate to shun.

IX

From that day forth no place to him could be
So lonely, but that thence might come a pang
Brought from without to inward misery.
Now, as he plodded on, with sullen clang
A sound of chains along the desert rang;
He looked, and saw upon a gibbet high
A human body that in irons swang,
Uplifted by the tempest whirling by;
And, hovering, round it often did a raven fly.[1]

X

It was a spectacle which none might view,
In spot so savage, but with shuddering pain;
Nor only did for him at once renew
All he had feared from man, but roused a train
Of the mind's phantoms, horrible as vain.
The stones, as if to cover him from day,
Rolled at his back along the living plain;
He fell, and without sense or motion lay;
But, when the trance was gone, feebly pursued his way.

XI

As one whose brain habitual phrensy fires
Owes to the fit in which his soul hath tossed
Profounder quiet, when the fit retires,
Even so the dire phantasma which had crossed
His sense, in sudden vacancy quite lost,
Left his mind still as a deep evening stream.
Nor, if accosted now, in thought engrossed,
Moody, or inly troubled, would he seem
To traveller who might talk of any casual theme.

XII

Hurtle the clouds in deeper darkness piled,
Gone is the raven timely rest to seek;
He seemed the only creature in the wild
On whom the elements their rage might wreak;
Save that the bustard, of those regions bleak
Shy tenant, seeing by the uncertain light
A man there wandering, gave a mournful shriek,
And half upon the ground, with strange affright,
Forced hard against the wind a thick unwieldy flight.

XIII

All, all was cheerless to the horizon's bound;
The weary eye—which, wheresoe'er it strays,
Marks nothing but the red sun's setting round,
Or on the earth strange lines, in former days
Left by gigantic arms—at length surveys
What seems an antique castle spreading wide;
Hoary and naked are its walls, and raise
Their brow sublime: in shelter there to bide
He turned, while rain poured down smoking on every side.

XIV

Pile of Stone-henge! so proud to hint yet keep
Thy secrets, thou that lov'st to stand and hear
The Plain resounding to the whirlwind's sweep,
Inmate of lonesome Nature's endless year;
Even if thou saw'st the giant wicker rear
For sacrifice its throngs of living men,
Before thy face did ever wretch appear,
Who in his heart had groaned with deadlier pain
Than he who, tempest-driven, thy shelter now would gain.

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[1] See Note.

XV

Within that fabric of mysterious form,
Winds met in conflict, each by turns supreme;
And, from the perilous ground dislodged, through storm
And rain he wildered on, no moon to stream
From gulf of parting clouds one friendly beam,
Nor any friendly sound his footsteps led;
Once did the lightning's faint disastrous gleam
Disclose a naked guide-post's double head,
Sight which tho' lost at once a gleam of pleasure shed.

XVI

No swinging sign-board creaked from cottage elm
To stay his steps with faintness overcome;
'Twas dark and void as ocean's watery realm
Roaring with storms beneath night's starless gloom;
No gipsy cowered o'er fire of furze or broom;
No labourer watched his red kiln glaring bright,
Nor taper glimmered dim from sick man's room;
Along the waste no line of mournful light
From lamp of lonely toll-gate streamed athwart the night.

XVII

At length, though hid in clouds, the moon arose;
The downs were visible—and now revealed
A structure stands, which two bare slopes enclose.
It was a spot, where, ancient vows fulfilled,
Kind pious hands did to the Virgin build
A lonely Spital; the belated swain
From the night terrors of that waste to shield:
But there no human being could remain,
And now the walls are named the "Dead House" of the plain.

XVIII

Though he had little cause to love the abode
Of man, or covet sight of mortal face,
Yet when faint beams of light that ruin showed,
How glad he was at length to find some trace
Of human shelter in that dreary place.
Till to his flock the early shepherd goes,
Here shall much-needed sleep his frame embrace.
In a dry nook where fern the floor bestrows
He lays his stiffened limbs,—his eyes begin to close;

XIX

When hearing a deep sigh, that seemed to come
From one who mourned in sleep, he raised his head,
And saw a woman in the naked room
Outstretched, and turning on a restless bed:
The moon a wan dead light around her shed.
He waked her—spake in tone that would not fail,
He hoped, to calm her mind; but ill he sped,
For of that ruin she had heard a tale
Which now with freezing thoughts did all her powers assail;

XX

Had heard of one who, forced from storms to shroud,
Felt the loose walls of this decayed Retreat
Rock to incessant neighings shrill and loud,
While his horse pawed the floor with furious heat;
Till on a stone, that sparkled to his feet,
Struck, and still struck again, the troubled horse:
The man half raised the stone with pain and sweat,
Half raised, for well his arm might lose its force
Disclosing the grim head of a late murdered corse.

XXI

Such tale of this lone mansion she had learned
And, when that shape, with eyes in sleep half drowned,

By the moon's sullen lamp she first discerned,
Cold stony horror all her senses bound.
Her he addressed in words of cheering sound;
Recovering heart, like answer did she make;
And well it was that, of the corse there found,
In converse that ensued she nothing spake;
She knew not what dire pangs in him such tale could wake.

XXII

But soon his voice and words of kind intent
Banished that dismal thought; and now the wind
In fainter howlings told its *rage* was spent:
Meanwhile discourse ensued of various kind,
Which by degrees a confidence of mind
And mutual interest failed not to create.
And, to a natural sympathy resigned,
In that forsaken building where they sate
The Woman thus retraced her own untoward fate.

XXIII

"By Derwent's side my father dwelt—a man
Of virtuous life, by pious parents bred;
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said:
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read;
For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

XXIV

"A little croft we owned—a plot of corn,
A garden stored with peas, and mint, and thyme,
And flowers for posies, oft on Sunday morn
Plucked while the church bells rang their earliest chime.
Can I forget our freaks at shearing time!
My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied;
The cowslip-gathering in June's dewy prime;
The swans that with white chests upreared in pride
Rushing and racing came to meet me at the water-side.

XXV

"The staff I well remember which upbore
The bending body of my active sire;
His seat beneath the honied sycamore
Where the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire;
When market-morning came, the neat attire
With which, though bent on haste, myself I decked;
Our watchful house-dog, that would tease and tire
The stranger till its barking-fit I checked;
The red-breast, known for years, which at my casement pecked.

XXVI

"The suns of twenty summers danced along,—
Too little marked how fast they rolled away:
But, through severe mischance and cruel wrong,
My father's substance fell into decay:
We toiled and struggled, hoping for a day
When Fortune might put on a kinder look;
But vain were wishes, efforts vain as they;
He from his old hereditary nook
Must part; the summons came;—our final leave we took.

XXVII

"It was indeed a miserable hour
When, from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
Peering above the trees, the steeple tower
That on his marriage day sweet music made!

Till then, he hoped his bones might there be laid
Close by my mother in their native bowers:
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed;—
I could not pray:—through tears that fell in showers
Glimmered our dear-loved home, alas! no longer ours!

XXVIII

"There was a Youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say:
'Mid the green mountains many a thoughtless song
We two had sung, like gladsome birds in May;
When we began to tire of childish play,
We seemed still more and more to prize each other;
We talked of marriage and our marriage day;
And I in truth did love him like a brother,
For never could I hope to meet with such another.

XXIX

"Two years were passed since to a distant town
He had repaired to ply a gainful trade:
What tears of bitter grief, till then unknown!
What tender vows, our last sad kiss delayed!
To him we turned:—we had no other aid:
Like one revived, upon his neck I wept;
And her whom he had loved in joy, he said,
He well could love in grief; his faith he kept;
And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

XXX

"We lived in peace and comfort; and were blest
With daily bread, by constant toil supplied.
Three lovely babes had lain upon my breast;
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
And knew not why. My happy father died,
When threatened war reduced the children's meal:
Thrice happy! that for him the grave could hide
The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
And tears that flowed for ills which patience might not heal.

XXXI

"'Twas a hard change; an evil time was come;
We had no hope, and no relief could gain:
But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
Beat round to clear the streets of want and pain.
My husband's arms now only served to strain
Me and his children hungering in his view;
In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain:
To join those miserable men he flew,
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we drew.

XXXII

"There were we long neglected, and we bore
Much sorrow ere the fleet its anchor weighed;
Green fields before us, and our native shore,
We breathed a pestilential air, that made
Ravage for which no knell was heard. We prayed
For our departure; wished and wished—nor knew,
'Mid that long sickness and those hopes delayed,
That happier days we never more must view.
The parting signal streamed—at last the land withdrew.

XXXIII

"But the calm summer season now was past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains high before the howling blast,
And many perished in the whirlwind's sweep.

We gazed with terror on their gloomy sleep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should rue:
We reached the western world, a poor devoted crew.

XXXIV

"The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would unman the firmest heart to hear.
All perished—all in one remorseless year,
Husband and children! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored."

XXXV

Here paused she of all present thought forlorn,
Nor voice nor sound, that moment's pain expressed,
Yet Nature, with excess of grief o'erborne,
From her full eyes their watery load released.
He too was mute; and, ere her weeping ceased,
He rose, and to the ruin's portal went,
And saw the dawn opening the silvery east
With rays of promise, north and southward sent;
And soon with crimson fire kindled the firmament.

XXXVI

"O come," he cried, "come, after weary night
Of such rough storm, this happy change to view."
So forth she came, and eastward looked; the sight
Over her brow like dawn of gladness threw;
Upon her cheek, to which its youthful hue
Seemed to return, dried the last lingering tear,
And from her grateful heart a fresh one drew:
The whilst her comrade to her pensive cheer
Tempered fit words of hope; and the lark warbled near.

XXXVII

They looked and saw a lengthening road, and wain
That rang down a bare slope not far remote:
The barrows glistered bright with drops of rain,
Whistled the waggoner with merry note,
The cock far off sounded his clarion throat,
But town, or farm, or hamlet, none they viewed,
Only were told there stood a lonely cot
A long mile thence. While thither they pursued
Their way, the Woman thus her mournful tale renewed.

XXXVIII

"Peaceful as this immeasurable plain
Is now, by beams of dawning light imprest,
In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main;
The very ocean hath its hour of rest.
I too forgot the heavings of my breast.
How quiet 'round me ship and ocean were!
As quiet all within me. I was blest,
And looked, and fed upon the silent air
Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair.

XXXIX

"Ah! how unlike those late terrific sleeps,
And groans that rage of racking famine spoke;
The unburied dead that lay in festering heaps,
The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke,
The shriek that from the distant battle broke,

The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host
Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke
To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish tossed,
Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost!

XL

"Some mighty gulf of separation past,
I seemed transported to another world;
A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
The impatient mariner the sail unfurled,
And, whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home
And from all hope I was for ever hurled.
For me—farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might come.

XLI

"And oft I thought (my fancy was so strong)
That I, at last, a resting-place had found;
'Here will I dwell,' said I, 'my whole life long,
Roaming the illimitable waters round;
Here will I live, of all but heaven disowned,
And end my days upon the peaceful flood.'—
To break my dream the vessel reached its bound;
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food.

XLII

"No help I sought; in sorrow turned adrift,
Was hopeless, as if cast on some bare rock;
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor raised my hand at any door to knock.
I lay where, with his drowsy mates, the cock
From the cross-timber of an out-house hung:
Dismally tolled, that night, the city clock!
At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
Nor to the beggar's language could I fit my tongue.

XLIII

"So passed a second day; and, when the third
Was come, I tried in vain the crowd's resort.
—In deep despair, by frightful wishes stirred,
Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort;
There, pains which nature could no more support,
With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall;
And, after many interruptions short
Of hideous sense, I sank, nor step could crawl:
Unsought for was the help that did my life recall.

XLIV

"Borne to a hospital, I lay with brain
Drowsy and weak, and shattered memory;
I heard my neighbours in their beds complain
Of many things which never troubled me—
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
Of looks where common kindness had no part,
Of service done with cold formality,
Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
And groans which, as they said, might make a dead man start.

XLV

"These things just served to stir the slumbering sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
With strength did memory return; and, thence
Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,
At houses, men, and common light, amazed.
The lanes I sought, and, as the sun retired,
Came where beneath the trees a faggot blazed,
The travellers saw me weep, my fate inquired,
And gave me food—and rest, more welcome, more desired.

XLVI

"Rough potters seemed they, trading soberly
With panniered asses driven from door to door;
But life of happier sort set forth to me,
And other joys my fancy to allure—
The bag-pipe dinning on the midnight moor
In barn uplighted; and companions boon,
Well met from far with revelry secure
Among the forest glades, while jocund June
Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

XLVII

"But ill they suited me—those journeys dark
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch!
To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
Or hang on tip-toe at the lifted latch.
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill:
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

XLVIII

"What could I do, unaided and unblest?
My father! gone was every friend of thine:
And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help; and, after marriage such as mine,
With little kindness would to me incline.
Nor was I then for toil or service fit;
My deep-drawn sighs no effort could confine;
In open air forgetful would I sit
Whole hours, with idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

XLIX

"The roads I paced, I loitered through the fields;
Contentedly, yet sometimes self-accused.
Trusted my life to what chance bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The ground I for my bed have often used:
But what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth,
Is that I have my inner self abused,
Foregone the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

L

"Through tears the rising sun I oft have viewed,
Through tears have seen him towards that world descend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude:
Three years a wanderer now my course I bend—
Oh! tell me whither—for no earthly friend
Have I."—She ceased, and weeping turned away;
As if because her tale was at an end,
She wept; because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.

LI

True sympathy the Sailor's looks expressed,
His looks—for pondering he was mute the while.
Of social Order's care for wretchedness,
Of Time's sure help to calm and reconcile,
Joy's second spring and Hope's long-treasured smile,
'Twas not for *him* to speak—a man so tried.
Yet, to relieve her heart, in friendly style
Proverbial words of comfort he applied,
And not in vain, while they went pacing side by side.

LII

Ere long, from heaps of turf, before their sight,
Together smoking in the sun's slant beam,
Rise various wreaths that into one unite
Which high and higher mounts with silver gleam:
Fair spectacle,—but instantly a scream
Thence bursting shrill did all remark prevent;
They paused, and heard a hoarser voice blaspheme,
And female cries. Their course they thither bent,
And met a man who foamed with anger vehement.

LIII

A woman stood with quivering lips and pale,
And, pointing to a little child that lay
Stretched on the ground, began a piteous tale;
How in a simple freak of thoughtless play
He had provoked his father, who straightway,
As if each blow were deadlier than the last,
Struck the poor innocent. Pallid with dismay
The Soldier's Widow heard and stood aghast;
And stern looks on the man her grey-haired Comrade cast.

LIV

His voice with indignation rising high
Such further deed in manhood's name forbade;
The peasant, wild in passion, made reply
With bitter insult and revilings sad;
Asked him in scorn what business there he had;
What kind of plunder he was hunting now;
The gallows would one day of him be glad;—
Though inward anguish damped the Sailor's brow,
Yet calm he seemed as thoughts so poignant would allow.

LV

Softly he stroked the child, who lay outstretched
With face to earth; and, as the boy turned round
His battered head, a groan the Sailor fetched
As if he saw—there and upon that ground—
Strange repetition of the deadly wound
He had himself inflicted. Through his brain
At once the griding iron passage found;
Deluge of tender thoughts then rushed amain,
Nor could his sunken eyes the starting tear restrain.

LVI

Within himself he said—What hearts have we!
The blessing this a father gives his child!
Yet happy thou, poor boy! compared with me,
Suffering not doing ill—fate far more mild.
The stranger's looks and tears of wrath beguiled
The father, and relenting thoughts awoke;
He kissed his son—so all was reconciled.
Then, with a voice which inward trouble broke
Ere to his lips it came, the Sailor them bespoke.

LVII

"Bad is the world, and hard is the world's law
Even for the man who wears the warmest fleece;
Much need have ye that time more closely draw
The bond of nature, all unkindness cease,
And that among so few there still be peace;
Else can ye hope but with such numerous foes
Your pains shall ever with your years increase?"—
While from his heart the appropriate lesson flows,
A correspondent calm stole gently o'er his woes.

LVIII

Forthwith the pair passed on; and down they look
Into a narrow valley's pleasant scene
Where wreaths of vapour tracked a winding brook,
That babbled on through groves and meadows green;
A low-roofed house peeped out the trees between;
The dripping groves resound with cheerful lays,
And melancholy lowings intervene
Of scattered herds, that in the meadow graze,
Some amid lingering shade, some touched by the sun's rays.

LIX

They saw and heard, and, winding with the road,
Down a thick wood, they dropt into the vale;
Comfort, by prouder mansions unbestowed,
Their wearied frames, she hoped, would soon regale.
Erelong they reached that cottage in the dale:
It was a rustic inn;—the board was spread,
The milk-maid followed with her brimming pail,
And lustily the master carved the bread,
Kindly the housewife pressed, and they in comfort fed.

LX

Their breakfast done, the pair, though loth, must part;
Wanderers whose course no longer now agrees.
She rose and bade farewell! and, while her heart
Struggled with tears nor could its sorrow ease,
She left him there; for, clustering round his knees,
With his oak-staff the cottage children played;
And soon she reached a spot o'erhung with trees
And banks of ragged earth; beneath the shade
Across the pebbly road a little runnel strayed.

LXI

A cart and horse beside the rivulet stood;
Chequering the canvas roof the sunbeams shone.
She saw the carman bend to scoop the flood
As the wain fronted her,—wherein lay one,
A pale-faced Woman, in disease far gone.
The carman wet her lips as well behoved;
Bed under her lean body there was none,
Though even to die near one she most had loved
She could not of herself those wasted limbs have moved.

LXII

The Soldier's Widow learned with honest pain
And homefelt force of sympathy sincere,
Why thus that worn-out wretch must there sustain
The jolting road and morning air severe.
The wain pursued its way; and following near
In pure compassion she her steps retraced
Far as the cottage. "A sad sight is here,"
She cried aloud; and forth ran out in haste
The friends whom she had left but a few minutes past.

LXIII

While to the door with eager speed they ran,
From her bare straw the Woman half upraised
Her bony visage—gaunt and deadly wan;
No pity asking, on the group she gazed
With a dim eye, distracted and amazed;
Then sank upon her straw with feeble moan.
Fervently cried the housewife—"God be praised,
I have a house that I can call my own;
Nor shall she perish there, untended and alone!"

LXIV

So in they bear her to the chimney seat,
And busily, though yet with fear, untie
Her garments, and, to warm her icy feet
And chafe her temples, careful hands apply.
Nature reviving, with a deep-drawn sigh
She strove, and not in vain, her head to rear;
Then said—"I thank you all; if I must die,
The God in heaven my prayers for you will hear;
Till now I did not think my end had been so near.

LXV

"Barred every comfort labour could procure,
Suffering what no endurance could assuage,
I was compelled to seek my father's door,
Though loth to be a burthen on his age.

But sickness stopped me in an early stage
Of my sad journey; and within the wain
They placed me—there to end life's pilgrimage,
Unless beneath your roof I may remain;
For I shall never see my father's door again.

LXVI

"My life, Heaven knows, hath long been burthensome;
But, if I have not meekly suffered, meek
May my end be! Soon will this voice be dumb:
Should child of mine e'er wander hither, speak
Of me, say that the worm is on my cheek.—
Torn from our hut, that stood beside the sea
Near Portland lighthouse in a lonesome creek,
My husband served in sad captivity
On shipboard, bound till peace or death should set him free.

LXVII

"A sailor's wife I knew a widow's cares,
Yet two sweet little ones partook my bed;
Hope cheered my dreams, and to my daily prayers
Our heavenly Father granted each day's bread;
Till one was found by stroke of violence dead,
Whose body near our cottage chanced to lie;
A dire suspicion drove us from our shed;
In vain to find a friendly face we try,
Nor could we live together those poor boys and I;

LXVIII

"For evil tongues made oath how on that day
My husband lurked about the neighbourhood;
Now he had fled, and whither none could say,
And *he* had done the deed in the dark wood—
Near his own home!—but he was mild and good;
Never on earth was gentler creature seen;
He'd not have robbed the raven of its food.
My husband's lovingkindness stood between
Me and all worldly harms and wrongs however keen."

LXIX

Alas! the thing she told with labouring breath
The Sailor knew too well. That wickedness
His hand had wrought; and when, in the hour of death,
He saw his Wife's lips move his name to bless
With her last words, unable to suppress
His anguish, with his heart he ceased to strive;
And, weeping loud in this extreme distress,
He cried—"Do pity me! That thou shouldst live
I neither ask nor wish—forgive me, but forgive!"

LXX

To tell the change that Voice within her wrought
Nature by sign or sound made no essay;
A sudden joy surprised expiring thought,
And every mortal pang dissolved away.
Borne gently to a bed, in death she lay;
Yet still while over her the husband bent,
A look was in her face which seemed to say,
"Be blest; by sight of thee from heaven was sent
Peace to my parting soul, the fulness of content."

LXXI

She slept in peace,—his pulses throbbed and stopped,
Breathless he gazed upon her face,—then took
Her hand in his, and raised it, but both dropped,
When on his own he cast a rueful look.
His ears were never silent; sleep forsook
His burning eyelids stretched and stiff as lead;
All night from time to time under him shook
The floor as he lay shuddering on his bed;
And oft he groaned aloud, "O God, that I were dead!"

LXXII

The Soldier's Widow lingered in the cot,
And, when he rose, he thanked her pious care
Through which his Wife, to that kind shelter brought,
Died in his arms; and with those thanks a prayer
He breathed for her, and for that merciful pair.
The corse interred, not one hour he remained
Beneath their roof, but to the open air
A burthen, now with fortitude sustained,
He bore within a breast where dreadful quiet reigned.

LXXIII

Confirmed of purpose, fearlessly prepared
For act and suffering, to the city straight
He journeyed, and forthwith his crime declared:
"And from your doom," he added, "now I wait,
Nor let it linger long, the murderer's fate."
Not ineffectual was that piteous claim:
"O welcome sentence which will end though late,"
He said, "the pangs that to my conscience came
Out of that deed. My trust, Saviour! is in thy name!"

LXXIV

His fate was pitied. Him in iron case
(Reader, forgive the intolerable thought)
They hung not:—no one on *his* form or face
Could gaze, as on a show by idlers sought;
No kindred sufferer, to his death-place brought
By lawless curiosity or chance,
When into storm the evening sky is wrought,
Upon his swinging corse an eye can glance,
And drop, as he once dropped, in miserable trance.

1793-94.

LINES

Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree, which stands near the lake of Esthwaite, on a desolate part of the shore, commanding a beautiful prospect.

Composed in part at school at Hawkshead. The tree has disappeared, and the slip of Common on which it stood, that ran parallel to the lake and lay open to it, has long been enclosed; so that the road has lost much of its attraction. This spot was my favourite walk in the evenings during the latter part of my school-time. The individual whose habits and character are here given, was a gentleman of the neighbourhood, a man of talent and learning, who had been educated at one of our Universities, and returned to pass his time in seclusion on his own estate. He died a bachelor in middle age. Induced by the beauty of the prospect, he built a small summer-house on the rocks above the peninsula on which the ferry-house stands. This property afterwards passed into the hands of the late Mr. Curwen. The site was long ago pointed out by Mr. West in his Guide, as the pride of the lakes, and now goes by the name of "The Station." So much used I to be delighted with the view from it, while a little boy, that some years before the first pleasure-house was built, I led thither from Hawkshead a youngster about my own age, an Irish boy, who was a servant to an itinerant conjuror. My motive was to witness the pleasure I expected the boy would receive from the prospect of the islands below and the intermingling water. I was not disappointed; and I hope the fact, insignificant as it may appear to some, may be thought worthy of note by others who may cast their eye over these notes.

NAY, Traveller! rest. This lonely Yew tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb?
What if the bee love not these barren boughs?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.
——————————Who he was
That piled these stones and with the mossy sod
First covered, and here taught this aged Tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember.—He was one who owned

No common soul. In youth by science nursed,
And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favoured Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow; 'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper:
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 'tis
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous! Nor, that time,
When nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those Beings to whose minds,
Warm from the labours of benevolence,
The world, and human life, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh,
Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
What he must never feel: and so, lost Man!
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died,—this seat his only monument.
  If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he, who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.
1795.

THE BORDERERS[1]

A Tragedy

Of this dramatic work I have little to say in addition to the short note which will be found at the end of the volume. It was composed at Racedown in Dorsetshire during the latter part of the year 1795, and in the course of the following year. Had it been the work of a later period of life, it would have been different in some respects from what it is now. The plot would have been something more complex, and a greater variety of characters introduced to relieve the mind from the pressure of incidents so mournful. The manners also would have been more attended to. My care was almost exclusively given to the passions and the characters, and the position in which the persons in the Drama stood relatively to each other, that the reader (for I had then no thought of the Stage) might be moved, and to a degree instructed, by lights penetrating somewhat into the depths of our nature. In this endeavour, I cannot think, upon a very late review, that I have failed. As to the scene and period of action, little more was required for my purpose than the absence of established law and government; so that the agents might be at liberty to act on their own impulses. Nevertheless I do remember that, having a wish to colour the manners in some degree from local history more than my knowledge enabled me to do, I read Redpath's *History of the Borders*, but found there nothing to my purpose. I once made an observation to Sir Walter Scott, in which he concurred, that it was difficult to conceive how so dull a book could be written on such a subject. Much about the same time, but a little after, Coleridge was employed in writing his tragedy of "Remorse," and it happened that soon after, through one of the Mr. Pooles, Mr. Knight the actor heard that we had been engaged in writing Plays, and upon his suggestion mine was curtailed, and I believe Coleridge's also was offered to Mr. Harris, manager of Covent Garden. For myself, I had no hope nor even a wish (though a successful play would, in the then state of my finances, have been a most welcome piece of good fortune) that he should accept my performance; so that I incurred no disappointment when the piece was *judiciously* returned as not calculated for the Stage. In this judgment I entirely concurred, and had it been otherwise, it was so natural for me to shrink from public notice, that any hope I might have had of success would not have reconciled me altogether to such an exhibition. Mr. C.'s Play was, as is well known, brought forward several years after through the kindness of Mr. Sheridan. In conclusion I may observe that while I was composing this Play I wrote a short essay illustrative of that constitution and those tendencies of human nature which make the apparently *motiveless* actions of bad men intelligible to careful observers. This was partly done with reference to the character of Oswald, and his persevering endeavour to lead the man he disliked into so heinous a crime; but still more to preserve in my distinct remembrance what I had observed of transition in character, and the reflections I had been led to make during the time I was a witness of the changes through which the French Revolution passed.

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[1] See Note.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARMADUKE.
OSWALD.
WALLACE. } Of the Band of Borderers.
LACY.
LENNOX.
HERBERT.
WILFRED, Servant to MARMADUKE.
Host.
Forester.
ELDRED, a Peasant.
Peasant, Pilgrims, etc.

IDONEA.
Female Beggar.
ELEANOR, Wife to ELDRED.

SCENE—*Borders of England and Scotland.*

TIME—*The Reign of Henry III.*

Readers already acquainted with my Poems will recognise, in the following composition, some eight or ten lines which I have not scrupled to retain in the places where they originally stood. It is proper, however, to add, that they would not have been used elsewhere, if I had foreseen the time when I might be induced to publish this Tragedy.

February 28, 1842.

ACT I.

SCENE—*Road in a Wood.*

WALLACE *and* LACY.

Lacy. The troop will be impatient; let us hie
Back to our post, and strip the Scottish Foray
Of their rich Spoil, ere they recross the Border.
—Pity that our young Chief will have no part
In this good service.
Wal. Rather let us grieve
That, in the undertaking which has caused
His absence, he hath sought, whate'er his aim,
Companionship with One of crooked ways,
From whose perverted soul can come no good
To our confiding, open-hearted, Leader.
Lacy. True; and, remembering how the Band have proved
That Oswald finds small favour in our sight,
Well may we wonder he has gained such power
Over our much-loved Captain.
Wal. I have heard
Of some dark deed to which in early life
His passion drove him—then a Voyager
Upon the midland Sea. You knew his bearing
In Palestine?
Lacy. Where he despised alike
Mahommedan and Christian. But enough;
Let us begone—the Band may else be foiled. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MARMADUKE *and* WILFRED.

Wil. Be cautious, my dear Master!
Mar. I perceive
That fear is like a cloak which old men huddle
About their love, as if to keep it warm.

Wil. Nay, but I grieve that we should part. This Stranger,
For such he is——
Mar. Your busy fancies, Wilfred,
Might tempt me to a smile; but what of him?
Wil. You know that you have saved his life.
Mar. I know it.
Wil. And that he hates you!—Pardon me, perhaps
That word was hasty.
Mar. Fy! no more of it.
Wil. Dear Master! gratitude's a heavy burden
To a proud Soul.—Nobody loves this Oswald—
Yourself, you do not love him.
Mar. I do more,
I honour him. Strong feelings to his heart
Are natural; and from no one can be learnt
More of man's thoughts and ways than his experience
Has given him power to teach: and then for courage
And enterprise—what perils hath he shunned?
What obstacles hath he failed to overcome?
Answer these questions, from our common knowledge,
And be at rest.
Wil. Oh, Sir!
Mar. Peace, my good Wilfred;
Repair to Liddesdale, and tell the Band
I shall be with them in two days, at farthest.
Wil. May He whose eye is over all protect you! [*Exit.*

Enter OSWALD (*a bunch of plants in his hand*).

Osw. This wood is rich in plants and curious simples.
Mar. (*looking at them*). The wild rose, and the poppy, and the nightshade:
Which is your favourite, Oswald?
Osw. That which, while it is
Strong to destroy, is also strong to heal—
[*Looking forward.*
Not yet in sight!—We'll saunter here awhile;
They cannot mount the hill, by us unseen.
Mar. (*a letter in his hand*). It is no common thing when one like you
Performs these delicate services, and therefore
I feel myself much bounden to you, Oswald;
'Tis a strange letter this!—You saw her write it?
Osw. And saw the tears with which she blotted it.
Mar. And nothing less would satisfy him?
Osw. No less;
For that another in his Child's affection
Should hold a place, as if 'twere robbery,
He seemed to quarrel with the very thought.
Besides, I know not what strange prejudice
Is rooted in his mind; this Band of ours,
Which you've collected for the noblest ends,
Along the confines of the Esk and Tweed
To guard the Innocent—he calls us "Outlaws";
And, for yourself, in plain terms he asserts
This garb was taken up that indolence
Might want no cover, and rapacity
Be better fed.
Mar. Ne'er may I own the heart
That cannot feel for one, helpless as he is.
Osw. Thou know'st me for a Man not easily moved,
Yet was I grievously provoked to think
Of what I witnessed.
Mar. This day will suffice
To end her wrongs.
Osw. But if the blind Man's tale
Should *yet* be true?
Mar. Would it were possible!
Did not the soldier tell thee that himself,
And others who survived the wreck, beheld
The Baron Herbert perish in the waves
Upon the coast of Cyprus?
Osw. Yes, even so,
And I had heard the like before: in sooth
The tale of this his quondam Barony
Is cunningly devised; and, on the back
Of his forlorn appearance, could not fail
To make the proud and vain his tributaries,
And stir the pulse of lazy charity.
The seignories of Herbert are in Devon;
We, neighbours of the Esk and Tweed: 'tis much
The Arch-Impostor——
Mar. Treat him gently, Oswald;
Though I have never seen his face, methinks,
There cannot come a day when I shall cease

To love him. I remember, when a Boy
Of scarcely seven years' growth, beneath the Elm
That casts its shade over our village school,
'Twas my delight to sit and hear Idonea
Repeat her Father's terrible adventures,
Till all the band of playmates wept together;
And that was the beginning of my love.
And, through all converse of our later years,
An image of this old Man still was present,
When I had been most happy. Pardon me
If this be idly spoken.
Osw. See, they come,
Two Travellers!
Mar. (*points*). The woman is Idonea.
Osw. And leading Herbert.
Mar. We must let them pass—
This thicket will conceal us.
[*They step aside.*

Enter IDONEA, *leading* HERBERT *blind.*

Idon. Dear Father, you sigh deeply; ever since
We left the willow shade by the brook-side,
Your natural breathing has been troubled.
Her. Nay,
You are too fearful; yet must I confess,
Our march of yesterday had better suited
A firmer step than mine.
Idon. That dismal Moor—
In spite of all the larks that cheered our path,
I never can forgive it: but how steadily
You paced along, when the bewildering moonlight
Mocked me with many a strange fantastic shape!—
I thought the Convent never would appear;
It seemed to move away from us: and yet,
That you are thus the fault is mine; for the air
Was soft and warm, no dew lay on the grass,
And midway on the waste ere night had fallen
I spied a Covert walled and roofed with sods—
A miniature; belike some Shepherd-boy,
Who might have found a nothing-doing hour
Heavier than work, raised it: within that hut
We might have made a kindly bed of heath,
And thankfully there rested side by side
Wrapped in our cloaks, and, with recruited strength,
Have hailed the morning sun. But cheerily, Father,—
That staff of yours, I could almost have heart
To fling't away from you: you make no use
Of me, or of my strength;—come, let me feel
That you do press upon me. There—indeed
You are quite exhausted. Let us rest awhile
On this green bank. [*He sits down.*
Her. (*after some time*). Idonea, you are silent,
And I divine the cause.
Idon. Do not reproach me
I pondered patiently your wish and will
When I gave way to your request; and now,
When I behold the ruins of that face,
Those eyeballs dark—dark beyond hope of light,
And think that they were blasted for my sake,
The name of Marmaduke is blown away:
Father, I would not change that sacred feeling
For all this world can give.
Her. Nay, be composed:
Few minutes gone a faintness overspread
My frame, and I bethought me of two things
I ne'er had heart to separate—my grave,
And thee, my Child!
Idon. Believe me, honoured Sire
'Tis weariness that breeds these gloomy fancies,
And you mistake the cause: you hear the woods
Resound with music, could you see the sun,
And look upon the pleasant face of Nature——
Her. I comprehend thee—I should be as cheerful
As if we two were twins; two songsters bred
In the same nest, my spring-time one with thine.
My fancies, fancies if they be, are such
As come, dear Child! from a far deeper source
Than bodily weariness. While here we sit
I feel my strength returning.—The bequest
Of thy kind Patroness, which to receive
We have thus far adventured, will suffice
To save thee from the extreme of penury;
But when thy Father must lie down and die
How wilt thou stand alone?

Idon. Is he not strong?
Is he not valiant?
Her. Am I then so soon
Forgotten? have my warnings passed so quickly
Out of thy mind? My dear, my only, Child;
Thou wouldst be leaning on a broken reed—
This Marmaduke——
Idon. O could you hear his voice:
Alas! you do not know him. He is one
(I wot not what ill tongue has wronged him with you)
All gentleness and love. His face bespeaks
A deep and simple meekness: and that Soul,
Which with the motion of a virtuous act
Flashes a look of terror upon guilt,
Is, after conflict, quiet as the ocean,
By a miraculous finger, stilled at once.
Her. Unhappy Woman!
Idon. Nay, it was my duty
Thus much to speak; but think not I forget—
Dear Father! how *could* I forget and live—
You and the story of that doleful night
When, Antioch blazing to her topmost towers,
You rushed into the murderous flames, returned
Blind as the grave, but, as you oft have told me,
Clasping your infant Daughter to your heart.
Her. Thy Mother too!—scarce had I gained the door,
I caught her voice; she threw herself upon me,
I felt thy infant brother in her arms;
She saw my blasted face—a tide of soldiers
That instant rushed between us, and I heard
Her last death-shriek, distinct among a thousand.
Idon. Nay, Father, stop not; let me hear it all.
Her. Dear Daughter! precious relic of that time—
For my old age, it doth remain with thee
To make it what thou wilt. Thou hast been told,
That when, on our return from Palestine,
I found how my domains had been usurped,
I took thee in my arms, and we began
Our wanderings together. Providence
At length conducted us to Rossland,—there,
Our melancholy story moved a Stranger
To take thee to her home—and for myself,
Soon after, the good Abbot of St. Cuthbert's
Supplied my helplessness with food and raiment,
And, as thou know'st, gave me that humble Cot
Where now we dwell.—For many years I bore
Thy absence, till old age and fresh infirmities
Exacted thy return, and our reunion.
I did not think that, during that long absence,
My Child, forgetful of the name of Herbert,
Had given her love to a wild Freebooter,
Who here, upon the borders of the Tweed,
Doth prey alike on two distracted Countries,
Traitor to both.
Idon. Oh, could you hear his voice!
I will not call on Heaven to vouch for me,
But let this kiss speak what is in my heart.

Enter a Peasant.

Pea. Good morrow, Strangers! If you want a Guide,
Let me have leave to serve you!
Idon. My Companion
Hath need of rest; the sight of Hut or Hostel
Would be most welcome.
Pea. Yon white hawthorn gained,
You will look down into a dell, and there
Will see an ash from which a sign-board hangs;
The house is hidden by the shade. Old Man,
You seem worn out with travel—shall I support you?
Her. I thank you; but, a resting-place so near,
'Twere wrong to trouble you.
Pea. God speed you both.
[*Exit* Peasant.
Her. Idonea, we must part. Be not alarmed—
'Tis but for a few days—a thought has struck me.
Idon. That I should leave you at this house, and thence
Proceed alone. It shall be so; for strength
Would fail you ere our journey's end be reached.
[*Exit* HERBERT *supported by* IDONEA.

Re-enter MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD.

Mar. This instant will we stop him——
Osw. Be not hasty,
For, sometimes, in despite of my conviction,
He tempted me to think the Story true;
'Tis plain he loves the Maid, and what he said
That savoured of aversion to thy name
Appeared the genuine colour of his soul—
Anxiety lest mischief should befal her
After his death.
Mar. I have been much deceived.
Osw. But sure he loves the Maiden, and never love
Could find delight to nurse itself so strangely,
Thus to torment her with *inventions!*—death—
There must be truth in this.
Mar. Truth in his story!
He must have felt it then, known what it was,
And in such wise to rack her gentle heart
Had been a tenfold cruelty.
Osw. Strange pleasures
Do we poor mortals cater for ourselves!
To see him thus provoke her tenderness
With tales of weakness and infirmity!
I'd wager on his life for twenty years.
Mar. We will not waste an hour in such a cause.
Osw. Why, this is noble! shake her off at once.
Mar. Her virtues are his instruments.—A Man
Who has so practised on the world's cold sense,
May well deceive his Child—what! leave her thus,
A prey to a deceiver?—no—no—no—
'Tis but a word and then——
Osw. Something is here
More than we see, or whence this strong aversion?
Marmaduke! I suspect unworthy tales
Have reached his ear—you have had enemies.
Mar. Enemies!—of his own coinage.
Osw. That may be,
But wherefore slight protection such as you
Have power to yield? perhaps he looks elsewhere.—
I am perplexed.
Mar. What hast thou heard or seen?
Osw. No—no—the thing stands clear of mystery;
(As you have said) he coins himself the slander
With which he taints her ear;—for a plain reason;
He dreads the presence of a virtuous man
Like you; he knows your eye would search his heart,
Your justice stamp upon his evil deeds
The punishment they merit. All is plain:
It cannot be——
Mar. What cannot be?
Osw. Yet that a Father
Should in his love admit no rivalship,
And torture thus the heart of his own Child——
Mar. Nay, you abuse my friendship!
Osw. Heaven forbid!—
There was a circumstance, trifling indeed—
It struck me at the time—yet I believe
I never should have thought of it again
But for the scene which we by chance have witnessed.
Mar. What is your meaning?
Osw. Two days gone I saw,
Though at a distance and he was disguised,
Hovering round Herbert's door, a man whose figure
Resembled much that cold voluptuary,
The villain, Clifford. He hates you, and he knows
Where he can stab you deepest.
Mar. Clifford never
Would stoop to skulk about a Cottage door—
It could not be.
Osw. And yet I now remember,
That, when your praise was warm upon my tongue,
And the blind Man was told how you had rescued
A maiden from the ruffian violence
Of this same Clifford, he became impatient
And would not hear me.
Mar. No—it cannot be—
I dare not trust myself with such a thought—
Yet whence this strange aversion? You are a man
Not used to rash conjectures——

Osw. If you deem it
A thing worth further notice, we must act
With caution, sift the matter artfully.
[*Exeunt* MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD.

SCENE—*The door of the Hostel.*
HERBERT, IDONEA, *and* Host.

Her. (*seated*). As I am dear to you, remember, Child!
This last request.
Idon. You know me, Sire; farewell!
Her. And are you going then? Come, come, Idonea,
We must not part,—I have measured many a league
When these old limbs had need of rest,—and now
I will not play the sluggard.
Idon. Nay, sit down.
[*Turning to* Host.
Good Host, such tendance as you would expect
From your own Children, if yourself were sick,
Let this old Man find at your hands; poor Leader,
[*Looking at the dog.*
We soon shall meet again. If thou neglect
This charge of thine, then ill befall thee!—Look,
The little fool is loth to stay behind.
Sir Host! by all the love you bear to courtesy,
Take care of him, and feed the truant well.
Host. Fear not, I will obey you;—but One so young,
And One so fair, it goes against my heart
That you should travel unattended, Lady!—
I have a palfrey and a groom: the lad
Shall squire you, (would it not be better, Sir?)
And for less fee than I would let him run
For any lady I have seen this twelvemonth.
Idon. You know, Sir, I have been too long your guard
Not to have learnt to laugh at little fears.
Why, if a wolf should leap from out a thicket,
A look of mine would send him scouring back,
Unless I differ from the thing I am
When you are by my side.
Her. Idonea, wolves
Are not the enemies that move my fears.
Idon. No more, I pray, of this. Three days at farthest
Will bring me back—protect him, Saints—farewell! [*Exit* IDONEA.
Host. 'Tis never drought with us—St. Cuthbert and his Pilgrims,
Thanks to them, are to us a stream of comfort:
Pity the Maiden did not wait a while;
She could not, Sir, have failed of company.
Her. Now she is gone, I fain would call her back.
Host (*calling*). Holla!
Her. No, no, the business must be done.—
What means this riotous noise?
Host. The villagers
Are flocking in—a wedding festival—
That's all—God save you, Sir.

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Ha! as I live,
The Baron Herbert.
Host. Mercy, the Baron Herbert!
Osw. So far into your journey! on my life,
You are a lusty Traveller. But how fare you?
Her. Well as the wreck I am permits. And you, Sir?
Osw. I do not see Idonea.
Her. Dutiful Girl,
She is gone before, to spare my weariness.
But what has brought you hither?
Osw. A slight affair,
That will be soon despatched.
Her. Did Marmaduke
Receive that letter?
Osw. Be at peace.—The tie
Is broken, you will hear no more of *him*.
Her. This is true comfort, thanks a thousand times!—
That noise!—would I had gone with her as far
As the Lord Clifford's Castle: I have heard
That, in his milder moods, he has expressed
Compassion for me. His influence is great
With Henry, our good King;—the Baron might
Have heard my suit, and urged my plea at Court.

No matter—he's a dangerous Man.—That noise !—
'Tis too disorderly for sleep or rest.
Idonea would have fears for me,—the Convent
Will give me quiet lodging. You have a boy, good Host,
And he must lead me back.
Osw. You are most lucky;
I have been waiting in the wood hard by
For a companion—here he comes; our journey

Enter MARMADUKE.

Lies on your way; accept us as your Guides.
Her. Alas! I creep so slowly.
Osw. Never fear;
We'll not complain of that.
Her. My limbs are stiff
And need repose. Could you but wait an hour?
Osw. Most willingly!—Come, let me lead you in,
And, while you take your rest, think not of us;
We'll stroll into the wood; lean on my arm.
[*Conducts* HERBERT *into the house.* *Exit* MARMADUKE.

Enter Villagers.

Osw. (*to himself coming out of the Hostel*). I have prepared a most apt Instrument—
The Vagrant must, no doubt, be loitering somewhere
About this ground; she hath a tongue well skilled,
By mingling natural matter of her own
With all the daring fictions I have taught her,
To win belief, such as my plot requires.
[*Exit* OSWALD.

Enter more Villagers, *a* Musician *among them.*

Host (*to them*). Into the court, my Friend, and perch yourself
Aloft upon the elm-tree. Pretty Maids,
Garlands and flowers, and cakes and merry thoughts,
Are here, to send the sun into the west
More speedily than you belike would wish.

SCENE *changes to the Wood adjoining the Hostel*—MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD *entering.*

Mar. I would fain hope that we deceive ourselves:
When first I saw him sitting there, alone,
It struck upon my heart I know not how.
Osw. To-day will clear up all.—You marked a Cottage,
That ragged Dwelling, close beneath a rock
By the brook-side: it is the abode of One,
A Maiden innocent till ensnared by Clifford,
Who soon grew weary of her; but, alas!
What she had seen and suffered turned her brain.
Cast off by her Betrayer, she dwells alone,
Nor moves her hands to any needful work:
She eats her food which every day the peasants
Bring to her hut; and so the Wretch has lived
Ten years; and no one ever heard her voice;
But every night at the first stroke of twelve
She quits her house, and, in the neighbouring Churchyard
Upon the self-same spot, in rain or storm,
She paces out the hour 'twixt twelve and one—
She paces round and round an Infant's grave,
And in the churchyard sod her feet have worn
A hollow ring; they say it is knee-deep——
Ah! what is here?
[*A female* Beggar *rises up, rubbing her eyes as if in sleep—a Child in her arms.*
Beg. Oh! Gentlemen, I thank you;
I've had the saddest dream that ever troubled
The heart of living creature.—My poor Babe
Was crying, as I thought, crying for bread
When I had none to give him; whereupon,
I put a slip of foxglove in his hand,
Which pleased him so, that he was hushed at once:
When, into one of those same spotted bells
A bee came darting, which the Child with joy
Imprisoned there, and held it to his ear,
And suddenly grew black, as he would die.

Mar. We have no time for this, my babbling Gossip ;
Here's what will comfort you.
[*Gives her money.*
Beg. The Saints reward you
For this good deed !—Well, Sirs, this passed away ;
And afterwards I fancied, a strange dog,
Trotting alone along the beaten road,
Came to my child as by my side he slept
And, fondling, licked his face, then on a sudden
Snapped fierce to make a morsel of his head :
But here he is, [*kissing the Child*] it must have been a dream.
Osw. When next inclined to sleep, take my advice,
And put your head, good Woman, under cover.
Beg. Oh, sir, you would not talk thus, if you knew
What life is this of ours, how sleep will master
The weary-worn.—You gentlefolk have got
Warm chambers to your wish. I'd rather be
A stone than what I am.—But two nights gone,
The darkness overtook me—wind and rain
Beat hard upon my head—and yet I saw
A glow-worm, through the covert of the furze,
Shine calmly as if nothing ailed the sky :
At which I half accused the God in Heaven.—
You must forgive me.
Osw. Ay, and if you think
The Fairies are to blame, and you should chide
Your favourite saint—no matter—this good day
Has made amends.
Beg. Thanks to you both ; but, O sir !
How would you like to travel on whole hours
As I have done, my eyes upon the ground,
Expecting still, I knew not how, to find
A piece of money glittering through the dust.
Mar. This woman is a prater. Pray, good Lady !
Do you tell fortunes ?
Beg. Oh Sir, you are like the rest.
This Little-one—it cuts me to the heart—
Well ! they might turn a beggar from their doors,
But there are Mothers who can see the Babe
Here at my breast, and ask me where I bought it :
This they can do, and look upon my face—
But you, Sir, should be kinder.
Mar. Come hither, Fathers,
And learn what nature is from this poor Wretch !
Beg. Ay, Sir, there's nobody that feels for us.
Why now—but yesterday I overtook
A blind old Greybeard and accosted him,
I' th' name of all the Saints, and by the Mass
He should have used me better !—Charity !
If you can melt a rock, he is your man ;
But I'll be even with him—here again
Have I been waiting for him.
Osw. Well, but softly,
Who is it that hath wronged you ?
Beg. Mark you me ;
I'll point him out ;—a Maiden is his guide,
Lovely as Spring's first rose ; a little dog,
Tied by a woollen cord, moves on before
With look as sad as he were dumb ; the cur,
I owe him no ill will, but in good sooth
He does his Master credit.
Mar. As I live,
'Tis Herbert and no other !
Beg. 'Tis a feast to see him,
Lank as a ghost and tall, his shoulders bent,
And long beard white with age—yet evermore,
As if he were the only Saint on earth,
He turns his face to heaven.
Osw. But why so violent
Against this venerable Man ?
Beg. I'll tell you :
He has the very hardest heart on earth ;
I had as lief turn to the Friar's school
And knock for entrance, in mid holiday.
Mar. But to your story.
Beg. I was saying, Sir—
Well !—he has often spurned me like a toad,
But yesterday was worse than all ;—at last
I overtook him, Sirs, my Babe and I,
And begged a little aid for charity :
But he was snappish as a cottage cur.
Well then, says I—I'll out with it ; at which
I cast a look upon the Girl, and felt
As if my heart would burst ; and so I left him.

Osw. I think, good Woman, you are the very person
Whom, but some few days past, I saw in Eskdale,
At Herbert's door.
Beg. Ay; and if truth were known
I have good business there.
Osw. I met you at the threshold,
And he seemed angry.
Beg. Angry! well he might;
And long as I can stir I'll dog him.—Yesterday,
To serve me so, and knowing that he owes
The best of all he has to me and mine.
But 'tis all over now.—That good old Lady
Has left a power of riches; and, I say it,
If there's a lawyer in the land, the knave
Shall give me half.
Osw. What's this?—I fear, good Woman,
You have been insolent.
Beg. And there's the Baron,
I spied him skulking in his peasant's dress.
Osw. How say you? in disguise?—
Mar. But what's your business
With Herbert or his Daughter?
Beg. Daughter! truly—
But how's the day?—I fear, my little Boy,
We've overslept ourselves.—Sirs, have you seen him? [*Offers to go.*
Mar. I must have more of this;—you shall not stir
An inch, till I am answered. Know you aught
That doth concern this Herbert?
Beg. You are provoked,
And will misuse me, Sir?
Mar. No trifling, Woman!
Osw. You are as safe as in a sanctuary;
Speak.
Mar. Speak!
Beg. He is a most hard-hearted Man.
Mar. Your life is at my mercy.
Beg. Do not harm me,
And I will tell you all!—You know not, Sir,
What strong temptations press upon the Poor.
Osw. Speak out.
Beg. Oh Sir, I've been a wicked Woman.
Osw. Nay, but speak out!
Beg. He flattered me, and said
What harvest it would bring us both; and so,
I parted with the Child.
Mar. Parted with whom?
Beg. Idonea, as he calls her; but the Girl
Is mine.
Mar. Yours, Woman! are you Herbert's wife?
Beg. Wife, Sir! his wife—not I; my husband, Sir,
Was of Kirkoswald—many a snowy winter
We've weathered out together. My poor Gilfred!
He has been two years in his grave.
Mar. Enough.
Osw. We've solved the riddle—Miscreant!
Mar. Do you,
Good Dame, repair to Liddesdale and wait
For my return; be sure you shall have justice.
Osw. A lucky woman! go, you have done good service. [*Aside.*
Mar. (*to himself*). Eternal praises on the power that saved her!—
Osw. (*gives her money*). Here's for your little boy—and when you christen him
I'll be his Godfather.
Beg. Oh Sir, you are merry with me.
In grange or farm this Hundred scarcely owns
A dog that does not know me.—These good Folks,
For love of God, I must not pass their doors;
But I'll be back with my best speed: for you—
God bless and thank you both, my gentle Masters. [*Exit* Beggar.
Mar. (*to himself*). The cruel Viper!—Poor devoted Maid,
Now I *do* love thee.
Osw. I am thunderstruck.
Mar. Where is she—holla!
[*Calling to the* Beggar, *who returns; he looks at her stedfastly.*
You are Idonea's mother?—
Nay, be not terrified—it does me good
To look upon you.
Osw. (*interrupting*). In a peasant's dress
You saw, who was it?
Beg. Nay, I dare not speak;
He is a man, if it should come to his ears
I never shall be heard of more.
Osw. Lord Clifford?

Beg. What can I do? believe me, gentle Sirs,
I love her, though I dare not call her daughter.
Osw. Lord Clifford—did you see him talk with Herbert?
Beg. Yes, to my sorrow—under the great oak
At Herbert's door—and when he stood beside
The blind Man—at the silent Girl he looked
With such a look—it makes me tremble, Sir,
To think of it.
Osw. Enough! you may depart.
Mar. (*to himself*). Father!—to God himself we cannot give
A holier name; and, under such a mask,
To lead a Spirit, spotless as the blessed,
To that abhorrèd den of brutish vice!—
Oswald, the firm foundation of my life
Is going from under me; these strange discoveries—
Looked at from every point of fear or hope,
Duty, or love—involve, I feel, my ruin.

ACT II.

SCENE—*A Chamber in the Hostel*—OSWALD *alone, rising from a Table on which he had been writing.*

Osw. They chose *him* for their Chief!—what covert part
He, in the preference, modest Youth, might take,
I neither know nor care. The insult bred
More of contempt than hatred; both are flown;
That either e'er existed is my shame:
'Twas a dull spark—a most unnatural fire
That died the moment the air breathed upon it.
—These fools of feeling are mere birds of winter
That haunt some barren island of the north,
Where, if a famishing man stretch forth his hand,
They think it is to feed them. I have left him
To solitary meditation;—now
For a few swelling phrases, and a flash
Of truth, enough to dazzle and to blind,
And he is mine for ever—here he comes.

Enter MARMADUKE.

Mar. These ten years she has moved her lips all day
And never speaks!
Osw. Who is it?
Mar. I have seen her.
Osw. Oh! the poor tenant of that ragged homestead,
Her whom the Monster, Clifford, drove to madness.
Mar. I met a peasant near the spot; he told me,
These ten years she had sate all day alone
Within those empty walls.
Osw. I too have seen her;
Chancing to pass this way some six months gone,
At midnight, I betook me to the Churchyard:
The moon shone clear, the air was still, so still
The trees were silent as the graves beneath them.
Long did I watch, and saw her pacing round
Upon the self-same spot, still round and round,
Her lips for ever moving.
Mar. At her door
Rooted I stood; for, looking at the woman,
I thought I saw the skeleton of Idonea.
Osw. But the pretended Father——
Mar. Earthly law
Measures not crimes like his.
Osw. *We* rank not, happily,
With those who take the spirit of their rule
From that soft class of devotees who feel
Reverence for life so deeply, that they spare
The verminous brood, and cherish what they spare
While feeding on their bodies. Would that Idonea
Were present, to the end that we might hear
What she can urge in his defence; she loves him.
Mar. Yes, loves him; 'tis a truth that multiplies
His guilt a thousand-fold.
Osw. 'Tis most perplexing:
What must be done?
Mar. We will conduct her hither;
These walls shall witness it—from first to last
He shall reveal himself.

Osw. Happy are we,
Who live in these disputed tracts, that own
No law but what each man makes for himself;
Here justice has indeed a field of triumph.
Mar. Let us be gone and bring her hither;—here
The truth shall be laid open, his guilt proved
Before her face. The rest be left to me.
Osw. You will be firm: but though we well may trust
The issue to the justice of the cause,
Caution must not be flung aside; remember,
Yours is no common life. Self-stationed here
Upon these savage confines, we have seen you
Stand like an isthmus 'twixt two stormy seas
That oft have checked their fury at your bidding.
'Mid the deep holds of Solway's mossy waste,
Your single virtue has transformed a Band
Of fierce barbarians into Ministers
Of peace and order. Aged men with tears
Have blessed their steps, the fatherless retire
For shelter to their banners. But it is,
As you must needs have deeply felt, it is
In darkness and in tempest that we seek
The majesty of Him who rules the world.
Benevolence, that has not heart to use
The wholesome ministry of pain and evil,
Becomes at last weak and contemptible.
Your generous qualities have won due praise,
But vigorous Spirits look for something more
Than Youth's spontaneous products; and to-day
You will not disappoint them; and hereafter——
Mar. You are wasting words; hear me then, once for all:
You are a Man—and therefore, if compassion,
Which to our kind is natural as life,
Be known unto you, you will love this Woman,
Even as I do; but I should loathe the light,
If I could think one weak or partial feeling——
Osw. You will forgive me——
Mar. If I ever knew
My heart, could penetrate its inmost core,
'Tis at this moment.—Oswald, I have loved
To be the friend and father of the oppressed,
A comforter of sorrow;—there is something
Which looks like a transition in my soul,
And yet it is not.—Let us lead him hither.
Osw. Stoop for a moment; 'tis an act of justice;
And where's the triumph if the delegate
Must fall in the execution of his office?
The deed is done—if you will have it so—
Here where we stand—that tribe of vulgar wretches
(You saw them gathering for the festival)
Rush in—the villains seize us——
Mar. Seize!
Osw. Yes, they—
Men who are little given to sift and weigh—
Would wreak on us the passion of the moment.
Mar. The cloud will soon disperse—farewell—but stay,
Thou wilt relate the story.
Osw. Am I neither
To bear a part in this Man's punishment,
Nor be its witness?
Mar. I had many hopes
That were most dear to me, and some will bear
To be transferred to thee.
Osw. When I'm dishonoured!
Mar. I would preserve thee. How may this be done?
Osw. By showing that you look beyond the instant,
A few leagues hence we shall have open ground,
And nowhere upon earth is place so fit
To look upon the deed. Before we enter
The barren Moor, hangs from a beetling rock
The shattered Castle in which Clifford oft
Has held infernal orgies—with the gloom,
And very superstition of the place,
Seasoning his wickedness. The Debauchee
Would there perhaps have gathered the first fruits
Of this mock Father's guilt.

Enter Host *conducting* HERBERT.

Host. The Baron Herbert
Attends your pleasure.
Osw. (*to* Host). We are ready—
(*to* HERBERT) Sir!
I hope you are refreshed.—I have just written

A notice for your Daughter, that she may know
What is become of you.—You'll sit down and sign it;
'Twill glad her heart to see her father's signature.
[*Gives the letter he had written.*
Her. Thanks for your care.
[*Sits down and writes. Exit* Host.
Osw. (*aside to* MARMADUKE). Perhaps it would be useful
That you too should subscribe your name.
[MARMADUKE *overlooks* HERBERT—*then writes—examines the letter eagerly.*
Mar. I cannot leave this paper.
[*He puts it up, agitated.*
Osw. (*aside*). Dastard! Come.
[MARMADUKE *goes towards* HERBERT *and supports him*—MARMADUKE *tremblingly beckons* OSWALD *to take his place.*
Mar. (*as he quits* HERBERT). There is a palsy in his limbs—he shakes.
[*Exeunt* OSWALD *and* HERBERT—MARMADUKE *following.*

SCENE *changes to a Wood—a Group of* Pilgrims *and* IDONEA *with them.*

First Pil. A grove of darker and more lofty shade I never saw.
Sec. Pil. The music of the birds
Drops deadened from a roof so thick with leaves.
Old Pil. This news! It made my heart leap up with joy.
Idon. I scarcely can believe it.
Old Pil. Myself, I heard
The Sheriff read, in open Court, a letter
Which purported it was the royal pleasure
The Baron Herbert, who, as was supposed,
Had taken refuge in this neighbourhood,
Should be forthwith restored. The hearing, Lady,
Filled my dim eyes with tears.—When I returned
From Palestine, and brought with me a heart,
Though rich in heavenly, poor in earthly, comfort,
I met your Father, then a wandering Outcast:
He had a Guide, a Shepherd's boy; but grieved
He was that One so young should pass his youth
In such sad service; and he parted with him.
We joined our tales of wretchedness together,
And begged our daily bread from door to door.
I talk familiarly to you, sweet Lady!
For once you loved me.
Idon. You shall back with me
And see your Friend again. The good old Man
Will be rejoiced to greet you.
Old Pil. It seems but yesterday
That a fierce storm o'ertook us, worn with travel,
In a deep wood remote from any town.
A cave that opened to the road presented
A friendly shelter, and we entered in.
Idon. And I was with you?
Old Pil. If indeed 'twas you—
But you were then a tottering Little-one—
We sate us down. The sky grew dark and darker:
I struck my flint, and built up a small fire
With rotten boughs and leaves, such as the winds
Of many autumns in the cave had piled.
Meanwhile the storm fell heavy on the woods;
Our little fire sent forth a cheering warmth
And we were comforted, and talked of comfort;
But 'twas an angry night, and o'er our heads
The thunder rolled in peals that would have made
A sleeping man uneasy in his bed.
O Lady, you have need to love your Father.
His voice—methinks I hear it now, his voice
When, after a broad flash that filled the cave,
He said to me, that he had seen his Child,
A face (no cherub's face more beautiful)
Revealed by lustre brought with it from Heaven;
And it was you, dear Lady!
Idon. God be praised,
That I have been his comforter till now!

And will be so through every change of fortune
And every sacrifice his peace requires.—
Let us be gone with speed, that he may hear
These joyful tidings from no lips but mine.
[*Exeunt* IDONEA *and* Pilgrims.

SCENE,—*The Area of a half-ruined Castle—on one side the entrance to a dungeon—*OSWALD *and* MARMADUKE *pacing backwards and forwards.*

Mar. 'Tis a wild night.
Osw. I'd give my cloak and bonnet
For sight of a warm fire.
Mar. The wind blows keen;
My hands are numb.
Osw. Ha! ha! 'tis nipping cold.
[*Blowing his fingers.*
I long for news of our brave Comrades; Lacy
Would drive those Scottish Rovers to their dens
If once they blew a horn this side the Tweed.
Mar. I think I see a second range of Towers;
This castle has another Area—come,
Let us examine it.
Osw. 'Tis a bitter night;
I hope Idonea is well housed. That horseman,
Who at full speed swept by us where the wood
Roared in the tempest, was within an ace
Of sending to his grave our precious Charge:
That would have been a vile mischance.
Mar. It would.
Osw. Justice had been most cruelly defrauded.
Mar. Most cruelly.
Osw. As up the steep we clomb,
I saw a distant fire in the north-east;
I took it for the blaze of Cheviot Beacon:
With proper speed our quarters may be gained
To-morrow evening.
[*Looks restlessly towards the mouth of the dungeon.*
Mar. When, upon the plank,
I had led him 'cross the torrent, his voice blessed me:
You could not hear, for the foam beat the rocks
With deafening noise,—the benediction fell
Back on himself; but changed into a curse.
Osw. As well indeed it might.
Mar. And this you deem
The fittest place?
Osw. (*aside*). He is growing pitiful.
Mar. (*listening*). What an odd moaning that is!—
Osw. Mighty odd
The wind should pipe a little, while we stand
Cooling our heels in this way!—I'll begin
And count the stars.
Mar. (*still listening*). That dog of his, you are sure,
Could not come after us—he *must* have perished;
The torrent would have dashed an oak to splinters.
You said you did not like his looks—that he
Would trouble us; if he were here again,
I swear the sight of him would quail me more
Than twenty armies.
Osw. How?
Mar. The old blind Man,
When you had told him the mischance, was troubled
Even to the shedding of some natural tears
Into the torrent over which he hung,
Listening in vain.
Osw. He has a tender heart!
[OSWALD *offers to go down into the dungeon.*
Mar. How now, what mean you?
Osw. Truly, I was going
To waken our stray Baron. Were there not
A farm or dwelling-house within five leagues,
We should deserve to wear a cap and bells,
Three good round years, for playing the fool here
In such a night as this.
Mar. Stop, stop.
Osw. Perhaps,
You'd better like we should descend together,
And lie down by his side—what say you to it?
Three of us—we should keep each other warm:
I'll answer for it that our four-legged friend

Shall not disturb us; further I'll not engage;
Come, come, for manhood's sake!
Mar. These drowsy shiverings,
This mortal stupor which is creeping over me,
What do they mean? were this my single body
Opposed to armies, not a nerve would tremble:
Why do I tremble now?—Is not the depth
Of this Man's crimes beyond the reach of thought?
And yet, in plumbing the abyss for judgment,
Something I strike upon which turns my mind
Back on herself, I think, again—my breast
Concentres all the terrors of the Universe:
I look at him and tremble like a child.
Osw. Is it possible?
Mar. One thing you noticed not:
Just as we left the glen a clap of thunder
Burst on the mountains with hell-rousing force.
This is a time, said he, when guilt may shudder;
But there's a Providence for them who walk
In helplessness, when innocence is with them.
At this audacious blasphemy, I thought
The spirit of vengeance seemed to ride the air.
Osw. Why are you not the man you were that moment?
[*He draws* Marmaduke *to the dungeon.*
Mar. You say he was asleep,—look at this arm,
And tell me if 'tis fit for such a work.
Oswald, Oswald!
[*Leans upon* Oswald.
Osw. This is some sudden seizure!
Mar. A most strange faintness,—will you hunt me out
A draught of water?
Osw. Nay, to see you thus
Moves me beyond my bearing.—I will try
To gain the torrent's brink.
[*Exit* Oswald.
Mar. (*after a pause*). It seems an age
Since that Man left me.—No, I am not lost.
Her. (*at the mouth of the dungeon*). Give me your hand; where are you, Friends? and tell me
How goes the night.
Mar. 'Tis hard to measure time.
In such a weary night, and such a place.
Her. I do not hear the voice of my friend Oswald.
Mar. A minute past, he went to fetch a draught
Of water from the torrent. 'Tis, you'll say,
A cheerless beverage.
Her. How good it was in you
To stay behind!—Hearing at first no answer,
I was alarmed.
Mar. No wonder; this is a place
That well may put some fears into *your* heart.
Her. Why so? a roofless rock had been a comfort,
Storm-beaten and bewildered as we were;
And in a night like this, to lend your cloaks
To make a bed for me!—My Girl will weep
When she is told of it.
Mar. This Daughter of yours
Is very dear to you.
Her. Oh! but you are young;
Over your head twice twenty years must roll,
With all their natural weight of sorrow and pain,
Ere can be known to you how much a Father
May love his Child.
Mar. Thank you, old Man, for this! [*Aside.*
Her. Fallen am I, and worn out, a useless Man;
Kindly have you protected me to-night,
And no return have I to make but prayers;
May you in age be blest with such a daughter!—
When from the Holy Land I had returned
Sightless, and from my heritage was driven,
A wretched Outcast—but this strain of thought
Would lead me to talk fondly.
Mar. Do not fear;
Your words are precious to my ears; go on.
Her. You will forgive me, but my heart runs over.
When my old Leader slipped into the flood
And perished, what a piercing outcry you
Sent after him. I have loved you ever since.
You start—where are we?
Mar. Oh, there is no danger;
The cold blast struck me.
Her. 'Twas a foolish question.

Mar. But when you were an Outcast?—Heaven is just;
Your piety would not miss its due reward;
The little Orphan then would be your succour,
And do good service, though she knew it not.
Her. I turned me from the dwellings of my Fathers,
Where none but those who trampled on my rights
Seemed to remember me. To the wide world
I bore her, in my arms; her looks won pity;
She was my Raven in the wilderness,
And brought me food. Have I not cause to love her?
Mar. Yes.
Her. More than ever Parent loved a Child?
Mar. Yes, yes.
Her. I will not murmur, merciful God!
I will not murmur; blasted as I have been,
Thou hast left me ears to hear my Daughter's voice,
And arms to fold her to my heart. Submissively
Thee I adore, and find my rest in faith.

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Herbert!—confusion! (*aside*). Here it is, my Friend,
[*Presents the Horn.*
A charming beverage for you to carouse,
This bitter night.
Her. Ha! Oswald! ten bright crosses
I would have given, not many minutes gone,
To have heard your voice.
Osw. Your couch, I fear, good Baron,
Has been but comfortless; and yet that place,
When the tempestuous wind first drove us hither,
Felt warm as a wren's nest. You'd better turn
And under covert rest till break of day,
Or till the storm abate.
(*To* MARMADUKE *aside*). He has restored you.
No doubt you have been nobly entertained?
But soft!—how came he forth? The Night-mare Conscience
Has driven him out of harbour?
Mar. I believe
You have guessed right.
Her. The trees renew their murmur:
Come, let us house together.
[OSWALD *conducts him to the dungeon.*
Osw. (*returns*). Had I not
Esteemed you worthy to conduct the affair
To its most fit conclusion, do you think
I would so long have struggled with my Nature,
And smothered all that's man in me?—away!—
[*Looking towards the dungeon.*
This man's the property of him who best
Can feel his crimes. I have resigned a privilege;
It now becomes my duty to resume it.
Mar. Touch not a finger——
Osw. What then must be done?
Mar. Which way soe'er I turn, I am perplexed.
Osw. Now, on my life, I grieve for you. The misery
Of doubt is insupportable. Pity, the facts
Did not admit of stronger evidence;
Twelve honest men, plain men, would set us right;
Their verdict would abolish these weak scruples.
Mar. Weak! I am weak—there does my torment lie,
Feeding itself.
Osw. Verily, when he said
How his old heart would leap to hear her steps,
You thought his voice the echo of Idonea's.
Mar. And never heard a sound so terrible.
Osw. Perchance you think so now?
Mar. I cannot do it:
Twice did I spring to grasp his withered throat,
When such a sudden weakness fell upon me,
I could have dropped asleep upon his breast.
Osw. Justice—is there not thunder in the word?
Shall it be law to stab the petty robber
Who aims but at our purse; and shall this Parricide—
Worse is he far, far worse (if foul dishonour
Be worse than death) to that confiding Creature

Whom he to more than filial love and duty
Hath falsely trained—shall he fulfil his purpose?
But you are fallen.
Mar. Fallen should I be indeed—
Murder—perhaps asleep, blind, old, alone,
Betrayed, in darkness! Here to strike the blow—
Away! away!——
[*Flings away his sword.*
Osw. Nay, I have done with you:
We'll lead him to the Convent. He shall live,
And she shall love him. With unquestioned title
He shall be seated in his Barony,
And we too chant the praise of his good deeds.
I now perceive we do mistake our masters,
And most despise the men who best can teach us:
Henceforth it shall be said that bad men only
Are brave: Clifford is brave; and that old Man
Is brave.
[*Taking* MARMADUKE'S *sword and giving it to him.*
To Clifford's arms he would have led
His Victim—haply to this desolate house.
Mar. (*advancing to the dungeon*). It must be ended!—
Osw. Softly; do not rouse him;
He will deny it to the last. He lies
Within the Vault, a spear's length to the left.
[MARMADUKE *descends to the dungeon.*
(*Alone.*) The Villains rose in mutiny to destroy me;
I could have quelled the Cowards, but this Stripling
Must needs step in, and save my life. The look
With which he gave the boon—I see it now!
The same that tempted me to loathe the gift.—
For this old venerable Greybeard—faith
'Tis his own fault if he hath got a face
Which doth play tricks with them that look on it;
'Twas this that put it in my thoughts—that countenance—
His staff—his figure—Murder!—what, of whom?
We kill a worn-out horse, and who but women
Sigh at the deed? Hew down a withered tree,
And none look grave but dotards. He may live
To thank me for this service. Rainbow arches,
Highways of dreaming passion, have too long,
Young as he is, diverted wish and hope
From the unpretending ground we mortals tread;—
Then shatter the delusion, break it up
And set him free. What follows? I have learned
That things will work to ends the slaves o' the world
Do never dream of. I *have* been what he—
This Boy—when he comes forth with bloody hands—
Might envy, and am now,—but he shall know
What I am now—
[*Goes and listens at the dungeon.*
Praying or parleying?—tut!
Is he not eyeless? He has been half-dead
These fifteen years——

Enter female Beggar *with two or three of her Companions.*

(*Turning abruptly.*) *Ha! speak*—what Thing art thou?
(*Recognises her.*) Heavens! my good Friend! [*To her.*
Beg. Forgive me, gracious Sir!—
Osw. (*to her companions*). Begone, ye Slaves, or I will raise a whirlwind
And send ye dancing to the clouds, like leaves. [*They retire affrighted.*
Beg. Indeed we meant no harm; we lodge sometimes
In this deserted Castle—*I repent me.*
[OSWALD *goes to the dungeon—listens—returns to the* Beggar.
Osw. Woman, thou hast a helpless Infant—keep
Thy secret for its sake, or verily
That wretched life of thine shall be the forfeit.
Beg. I *do* repent me, Sir; I fear the curse

Of that blind Man. 'Twas not your money, sir——
Osw. Begone!
Beg. (*going*). There is some wicked deed in hand: [*Aside.*
Would I could find the old Man and his Daughter. [*Exit* Beggar.

MARMADUKE *re-enters from the dungeon.*

Osw. It is all over then;—your foolish fears
Are hushed to sleep, by your own act and deed,
Made quiet as he is.
Mar. Why came you down?
And when I felt your hand upon my arm
And spake to you, why did you give no answer?
Feared you to waken him? he must have been
In a deep sleep. I whispered to him thrice.
There are the strangest echoes in that place!
Osw. Tut! let them gabble till the day of doom.
Mar. Scarcely, by groping, had I reached the Spot,
When round my wrist I felt a cord drawn tight,
As if the blind Man's dog were pulling at it.
Osw. But after that?
Mar. The features of Idonea
Lurked in his face——
Osw. Psha! Never to these eyes
Will retribution show itself again
With aspect so inviting. Why forbid me
To share your triumph?
Mar. Yes, her very look,
Smiling in sleep——
Osw. A pretty feat of Fancy!
Mar. Though but a glimpse, it sent me to my prayers.
Osw. Is he alive?
Mar. What mean you? who alive?
Osw. Herbert! since you will have it, Baron Herbert;
He who will gain his Seignory when Idonea
Hath become Clifford's harlot—is *he* living?
Mar. The old Man in that dungeon *is* alive.
Osw. Henceforth, then, will I never in camp or field
Obey you more. Your weakness, to the Band,
Shall be proclaimed: brave Men, they all shall hear it.
You a protector of humanity!
Avenger you of outraged innocence!
Mar. 'Twas dark—dark as the grave; yet did I see,
Saw him—his face turned toward me; and I tell thee
Idonea's filial countenance was there
To baffle me—it put me to my prayers.
Upwards I cast my eyes, and, through a crevice,
Beheld a star twinkling above my head,
And, by the living God, I could not do it.
[*Sinks exhausted.*
Osw. (*to himself*). Now may I perish if this turn do more
Than make me change my course.
(*To* MARMADUKE.) Dear Marmaduke,
My words were rashly spoken; I recall them:
I feel my error; shedding human blood
Is a most serious thing.
Mar. Not I alone,
Thou too art deep in guilt.
Osw. We have indeed
Been most presumptuous. There *is* guilt in this,
Else could so strong a mind have ever known
These trepidations? Plain it is that Heaven
Has marked out this foul Wretch as one whose crimes
Must never come before a mortal judgment-seat,
Or be chastised by mortal instruments.
Mar. A thought that's worth a thousand worlds!
[*Goes towards the dungeon.*
Osw. I grieve
That, in my zeal, I have caused you so much pain.
Mar. Think not of that! 'tis over—we are safe.
Osw. (*as if to himself, yet speaking aloud*).
The truth is hideous, but how stifle it?
[*Turning to* MARMADUKE.
Give me your sword—nay, here are stones and fragments,
The least of which would beat out a man's brains;
Or you might drive your head against that wall.
No! this is not the place to hear the tale:

It should be told you pinioned in your bed,
Or on some vast and solitary plain
Blown to you from a trumpet.
Mar. Why talk thus?
Whate'er the monster brooding in your breast
I care not: fear I have none, and cannot fear——
[*The sound of a horn is heard.*
That horn again—'Tis some one of our Troop;
What do they here? Listen!
Osw. What! dogged like thieves!

Enter WALLACE *and* LACY, etc.

Lacy. You are found at last, thanks to the vagrant Troop
For not misleading us.
Osw. (*looking at* WALLACE). That subtle Greybeard—
I'd rather see my father's ghost.
Lacy (*to* MARMADUKE). My Captain,
We come by order of the Band. Belike
You have not heard that Henry has at last
Dissolved the Barons' League, and sent abroad
His Sheriffs with fit force to reinstate
The genuine owners of such Lands and Baronies
As, in these long commotions, have been seized.
His Power is this way tending. It befits us
To stand upon our guard, and with our swords
Defend the innocent.
Mar. Lacy! we look
But at the surfaces of things; we hear
Of towns in flames, fields ravaged, young and old
Driven out in troops to want and nakedness;
Then grasp our swords and rush upon a cure
That flatters us, because it asks not thought:
The deeper malady is better hid;
The world is poisoned at the heart.
Lacy. What mean you?
Wal. (*whose eye has been fixed suspiciously upon* OSWALD). Ay, what is it you mean?
Mar. Hark'e, my Friends;—
[*Appearing gay.*
Were there a Man who, being weak and helpless
And most forlorn, should bribe a Mother, pressed
By penury, to yield him up her Daughter,
A little Infant, and instruct the Babe,
Prattling upon his knee, to call him Father——
Lacy. Why, if his heart be tender, that offence
I could forgive him.
Mar. (*going on*). And should he make the Child
An instrument of falsehood, should he teach her
To stretch her arms, and dim the gladsome light
Of infant playfulness with piteous looks
Of misery that was not——
Lacy. Troth, 'tis hard—
But in a world like ours——
Mar. (*changing his tone*). This self-same Man—
Even while he printed kisses on the cheek
Of this poor Babe, and taught its innocent tongue
To lisp the name of Father—could he look
To the unnatural harvest of that time
When he should give her up, a Woman grown,
To him who bid the highest in the market
Of foul pollution——
Lacy. The whole visible world
Contains not such a Monster!
Mar. For this purpose
Should he resolve to taint her Soul by means
Which bathe the limbs in sweat to think of them;
Should he, by tales which would draw tears from iron,
Work on her nature, and so turn compassion
And gratitude to ministers of vice,
And make the spotless spirit of filial love
Prime mover in a plot to damn his Victim
Both soul and body——
Wal. 'Tis too horrible;
Oswald, what say you to it?
Lacy. Hew him down,
And fling him to the ravens.
Mar. But his aspect
It is so meek, his countenance so venerable.
Wal. (*with an appearance of mistrust*). But how, what say you, Oswald?
Lacy (*at the same moment*). Stab him, were it
Before the Altar.
Mar. What, if he were sick,

Tottering upon the very verge of life,
And old, and blind——
Lacy. Blind, say you?
Osw. (*coming forward*). Are we Men,
Or own we baby Spirits? Genuine courage
Is not an accidental quality,
A thing dependent for its casual birth
On opposition and impediment.
Wisdom, if Justice speak the word, beats down
The giant's strength; and, at the voice of Justice,
Spares not the worm. The giant and the worm—
She weighs them in one scale. The wiles of woman,
And craft of age, seducing reason, first
Made weakness a protection, and obscured
The moral shapes of things. His tender cries
And helpless innocence—do they protect
The infant lamb? and shall the infirmities,
Which have enabled this enormous Culprit
To perpetrate his crimes, serve as a Sanctuary
To cover him from punishment? Shame!—Justice,
Admitting no resistance, bends alike
The feeble and the strong. She needs not here
Her bonds and chains, which make the mighty feeble.
—We recognise in this old Man a victim
Prepared already for the sacrifice.
Lacy. By heaven, his words are reason!
Osw. Yes, my Friends,
His countenance is meek and venerable;
And, by the Mass, to see him at his prayers!—
I am of flesh and blood, and may I perish
When my heart does not ache to think of it!—
Poor Victim! not a virtue under heaven
But what was made an engine to ensnare thee;
But yet I trust, Idonea, thou art safe.
Lacy. Idonea!
Wal. How! what? your Idonea?
To MARMADUKE.
Mar. *Mine*;
But now no longer mine. You know Lord Clifford;
He is the Man to whom the Maiden—pure
As beautiful, and gentle and benign,
And in her ample heart loving even me—
Was to be yielded up.
Lacy. Now, by the head
Of my own child, this Man must die; my hand,
A worthier wanting, shall itself entwine
In his grey hairs!—
Mar. (*to* LACY). I love the Father in thee.
You know me, Friends; I have a heart to feel,
And I have felt, more than perhaps becomes me
Or duty sanctions.
Lacy. We will have ample justice.
Who are we, Friends? Do we not live on ground
Where Souls are self-defended, free to grow
Like mountain oaks rocked by the stormy wind.
Mark the Almighty Wisdom, which decreed
This monstrous crime to be laid open—*here*,
Where Reason has an eye that she can use,
And Men alone are Umpires. To the Camp
He shall be led, and there, the Country round
All gathered to the spot, in open day
Shall Nature be avenged.
Osw. 'Tis nobly thought;
His death will be a monument for ages.
Mar. (*to* LACY). I thank you for that hint. He shall be brought
Before the Camp, and would that best and wisest
Of every country might be present. There,
His crime shall be proclaimed; and for the rest
It shall be done as Wisdom shall decide:
Meanwhile, do you two hasten back and see
That all is well prepared.
Wal. We will obey you.
(*Aside.*) But softly! we must look a little nearer.
Mar. Tell where you found us. At some future time
I will explain the cause. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE—*The door of the Hostel, a group of* Pilgrims *as before;* IDONEA *and the* Host *among them.*

Host. Lady, you'll find your Father at the Convent
As I have told you: He left us yesterday
With two Companions; one of them, as seemed,
His most familiar Friend. (*Going.*) There was a letter
Of which I heard them speak, but that I fancy
Has been forgotten.
Idon. (*to* Host). Farewell!
Host. Gentle pilgrims,
St. Cuthbert speed you on your holy errand.
[*Exeunt* IDONEA *and* Pilgrims.

SCENE—*A desolate Moor.*

OSWALD (*alone*).

Osw. Carry him to the Camp! Yes, to the Camp.
Oh, Wisdom! a most wise resolve! and then,
That half a word should blow it to the winds!
This last device must end my work.—Methinks
It were a pleasant pastime to construct
A scale and table of belief—as thus—
Two columns, one for passion, one for proof;
Each rises as the other falls: and first,
Passion a unit and *against* us—proof—
Nay, we must travel in another path,
Or we're stuck fast for ever;—passion, then,
Shall be a unit *for* us; proof—no, passion!
We'll not insult thy majesty by time,
Person, and place—the where, the when, the how,
And all particulars that dull brains require
To constitute the spiritless shape of Fact,
They bow to, calling the idol, Demonstration.
A whipping to the Moralists who preach
That misery is a sacred thing: for me,
I know no cheaper engine to degrade a man,
Nor any half so sure. This Stripling's mind
Is shaken till the dregs float on the surface;
And, in the storm and anguish of the heart,
He talks of a transition in his Soul,
And dreams that he is happy. We dissect
The senseless body, and why not the mind?—
These are strange sights—the mind of man, upturned,
Is in all natures a strange spectacle;
In some a hideous one—hem! shall I stop?
No.—Thoughts and feelings will sink deep, but then
They have no substance. Pass but a few minutes,
And something shall be done which Memory
May touch, whene'er her Vassals are at work.

Enter MARMADUKE, *from behind.*

Osw. (*turning to meet him*). But listen, for my peace——
Mar. Why, I *believe* you.
Osw. But hear the proofs——
Mar. Ay, prove that when two peas
Lie snugly in a pod, the pod must then
Be larger than the peas—prove this—'twere matter
Worthy the hearing. Fool was I to dream
It ever could be otherwise!
Osw. Last night
When I returned with water from the brook,
I overheard the Villains—every word
Like red-hot iron burnt into my heart.
Said one, "It is agreed on. The blind Man
Shall feign a sudden illness, and the Girl,
Who on her journey must proceed alone,
Under pretence of violence, be seized.
She is," continued the detested Slave,
"She is right willing—strange if she were not!—
They say, Lord Clifford is a savage man;
But, faith, to see him in his silken tunic,
Fitting his low voice to the minstrel's harp,
There's witchery in't. I never knew a maid
That could withstand it. True," continued he,
"When we arranged the affair, she wept a little
(Not the less welcome to my Lord for that)
And said, 'My Father he will have it so.'"
Mar. I am your hearer.

Osw. This I caught, and more
That may not be retold to any ear,
The obstinate bolt of a small iron door
Detained them near the gateway of the Castle.
By a dim lantern's light I saw that wreaths
Of flowers were in their hands, as if designed
For festive decoration; and they said,
With brutal laughter and most foul allusion,
That they should share the banquet with their Lord
And his new Favourite.

Mar. Misery!—

Osw. I knew
How you would be disturbed by this dire news,
And therefore chose this solitary Moor,
Here to impart the tale, of which, last night,
I strove to ease my mind, when our two Comrades,
Commissioned by the Band, burst in upon us.

Mar. Last night, when moved to lift the avenging steel,
I did believe all things were shadows—yea,
Living or dead all things were bodiless,
Or but the mutual mockeries of body,
Till that same star summoned me back again.
Now I could laugh till my ribs ached. Oh Fool!
To let a creed, built in the heart of things,
Dissolve before a twinkling atom!—Oswald,
I could fetch lessons out of wiser schools
Than you have entered, were it worth the pains.
Young as I am, I might go forth a teacher,
And you should see how deeply I could reason
Of love in all its shapes, beginnings, ends;
Of moral qualities in their diverse aspects;
Of actions, and their laws and tendencies.

Osw. You take it as it merits——

Mar. One a King,
General or Cham, Sultan or Emperor,
Strews twenty acres of good meadow-ground
With carcases, in lineament and shape
And substance, nothing differing from his own,
But that they cannot stand up of themselves;
Another sits i' th' sun, and by the hour
Floats kingcups in the brook—a Hero one
We call, and scorn the other as Time's spendthrift;
But have they not a world of common ground
To occupy—both fools, or wise alike,
Each in his way?

Osw. Troth, I begin to think so

Mar. Now for the corner-stone of my philosophy:
I would not give a denier for the man
Who, on such provocation as this earth
Yields, could not chuck his babe beneath the chin,
And send it with a fillip to its grave.

Osw. Nay, you leave me behind.

Mar. That such a One,
So pious in demeanour! in his look
So saintly and so pure!——Hark'e, my Friend,
I'll plant myself before Lord Clifford's Castle,
A surly mastiff kennels at the gate,
And he shall howl and I will laugh, a medley
Most tunable.

Osw. In faith, a pleasant scheme;
But take your sword along with you, for that
Might in such neighbourhood find seemly use.—
But first, how wash our hands of this old Man?

Mar. Oh yes, that mole, that viper in the path;
Plague on my memory, him I had forgotten.

Osw. You know we left him sitting—see him yonder.

Mar. Ha! ha!—

Osw. As 'twill be but a moment's work,
I will stroll on; you follow when 'tis done.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to another part of the Moor at a short distance*—HERBERT *is discovered seated on a stone.*

Her. A sound of laughter, too!—'tis well—I feared,
The Stranger had some pitiable sorrow
Pressing upon his solitary heart.
Hush!—'tis the feeble and earth-loving wind

That creeps along the bells of the crisp heather.
Alas! 'tis cold—I shiver in the sunshine—
What can this mean? There is a psalm that speaks
Of God's parental mercies—with Idonea
I used to sing it.—Listen!—what foot is there?

Enter MARMADUKE.

Mar. (*aside—looking at* HERBERT). And I have loved this Man! and *she* hath loved him!
And I loved her, and she loves the Lord Clifford!
And there it ends;—if this be not enough
To make mankind merry for evermore,
Then plain it is as day, that eyes were made
For a wise purpose—verily to weep with!
[*Looking round.*
A pretty prospect this, a masterpiece
Of Nature, finished with most curious skill!
(*To* HERBERT.) Good Baron, have you ever practised tillage?
Pray tell me what this land is worth by the acre?
Her. How glad I am to hear your voice! I know not
Wherein I have offended you;—last night
I found in you the kindest of Protectors;
This morning, when I spoke of weariness,
You from my shoulder took my scrip and threw it
About your own; but for these two hours past
Once only have you spoken, when the lark
Whirred from among the fern beneath our feet,
And I, no coward in my better days,
Was almost terrified.
Mar. That's excellent!—
So, you bethought you of the many ways
In which a man may come to his end, whose crimes
Have roused all Nature up against him—pshaw!—
Her. For mercy's sake, is nobody in sight?
No traveller, peasant, herdsman?
Mar. Not a soul:
Here is a tree, ragged, and bent, and bare,
That turns its goat's-beard flakes of pea-green moss
From the stern breathing of the rough sea-wind;
This have we, but no other company:
Commend me to the place. If a man should die
And leave his body here, it were all one
As he were twenty fathoms underground.
Her. Where is our common Friend?
Mar. A ghost, methinks—
The Spirit of a murdered man, for instance—
Might have fine room to ramble about here,
A grand domain to squeak and gibber in.
Her. Lost Man! if thou have any close-pent guilt
Pressing upon thy heart, and this the hour
Of visitation——
Mar. A bold word from *you!*
Her. Restore him, Heaven!
Mar. The desperate Wretch!—A Flower
Fairest of all flowers, was she once, but now
They have snapped her from the stem—Poh! let her lie
Besoiled with mire, and let the houseless snail
Feed on her leaves. You knew her well—ay, there,
Old Man! you were a very Lynx, you knew
The worm was in her——
Her. Mercy! Sir, what mean you?
Mar. You have a Daughter!
Her. Oh that she were here!—
She hath an eye that sinks into all hearts,
And if I have in aught offended you,
Soon would her gentle voice make peace between us.
Mar. (*aside*). I do believe he weeps—I could weep too—
There is a vein of her voice that runs through his:
Even such a Man my fancy bodied forth
From the first moment that I loved the Maid;
And for his sake I loved her more: these tears—
I did not think that aught was left in me
Of what I have been—yes, I thank thee, Heaven!
One happy thought has passed across my mind.
—It may not be—I am cut off from man;
No more shall I be man—no more shall I
Have human feelings!—(*To* HERBERT)—Now, for a little more
About your Daughter!

Her. Troops of armed men,
Met in the roads, would bless us; little children,
Rushing along in the full tide of play,
Stood silent as we passed them! I have heard
The boisterous carman, in the miry road,
Check his loud whip and hail us with mild voice,
And speak with milder voice to his poor beasts.
Mar. And whither were you going?
Her. Learn, young Man,
To fear the virtuous, and reverence misery,
Whether too much for patience, or, like mine,
Softened till it becomes a gift of mercy.
Mar. Now, this is as it should be!
Her. I am weak!—
My Daughter does not know how weak I am;
And, as thou see'st, under the arch of heaven
Here do I stand, alone, to helplessness,
By the good God, our common Father, doomed!—
But I had once a spirit and an arm——
Mar. Now, for a word about your Barony:
I fancy when you left the Holy Land,
And came to—what's your title—eh? your claims
Were undisputed!
Her. Like a mendicant,
Whom no one comes to meet, I stood alone;—
I murmured—but, remembering Him who feeds
The pelican and ostrich of the desert,
From my own threshold I looked up to Heaven
And did not want glimmerings of quiet hope.
So, from the court I passed, and down the brook,
Led by its murmur, to the ancient oak
I came; and when I felt its cooling shade,
I sate me down, and cannot but believe—
While in my lap I held my little Babe
And clasped her to my heart, my heart that ached
More with delight than grief—I heard a voice
Such as by Cherith on Elijah called;
It said, "I will be with thee." A little boy,
A shepherd-lad, ere yet my trance was gone,
Hailed us as if he had been sent from heaven,
And said, with tears, that he would be our guide:
I had a better guide—that innocent Babe—
Her, who hath saved me, to this hour, from harm,
From cold, from hunger, penury, and death;
To whom I owe the best of all the good
I have, or wish for, upon earth—and more
And higher far than lies within earth's bounds:
Therefore I bless her: when I think of Man,
I bless her with sad spirit,—when of God,
I bless her in the fulness of my joy!
Mar. The name of daughter in his mouth, he prays!
With nerves so steady, that the very flies
Sit unmolested on his staff.—Innocent!—
If he were innocent—then he would tremble
And be disturbed, as I am. (*Turning aside.*) I have read
In Story, what men now alive have witnessed,
How, when the People's mind was racked with doubt,
Appeal was made to the great Judge: the Accused
With naked feet walked over burning ploughshares.
Here is a Man by Nature's hand prepared
For a like trial, but more merciful.
Why else have I been led to this bleak Waste?
Bare is it, without house or track, and destitute
Of obvious shelter, as a shipless sea.
Here will I leave him—here—All-seeing God!
Such as *he* is, and sore perplexed as I am,
I will commit him to this final *Ordeal!*—
He heard a voice—a shepherd-lad came to him
And was his guide; if once, why not again,
And in this desert? If never—then the whole
Of what he says, and looks, and does, and is,
Makes up one damning falsehood. Leave him here
To cold and hunger!—Pain is of the heart,
And what are a few throes of bodily suffering

If they can waken one pang of remorse?
[*Goes up to* HERBERT.
Old Man! my wrath is as a flame burnt out,
It cannot be rekindled. Thou art here
Led by my hand to save thee from perdition;
Thou wilt have time to breathe and think——

Her. Oh, Mercy!

Mar. I know the need that all men have of mercy,
And therefore leave thee to a righteous judgment.

Her. My Child, my blessèd Child!

Mar. No more of that;
Thou wilt have many guides if thou art innocent;
Yea, from the utmost corners of the earth,
That Woman will come o'er this Waste to save thee.
[*He pauses and looks at* HERBERT'S *staff.*
Ha! what is here? and carved by her own hand! [*Reads upon the staff.*
"I am eyes to the blind, saith the Lord.
He that puts his trust in me shall not fail!"
Yes, be it so;—repent and be forgiven—
God and that staff are now thy only guides.
[*He leaves* HERBERT *on the Moor.*

SCENE—*An eminence, a Beacon on the summit.*

LACY, WALLACE, LENNOX, etc. etc.

Several of the Band (*confusedly*). But patience!

One of the Band. Curses on that Traitor, Oswald!—
Our Captain made a prey to foul device!—

Len. (*to* WAL.) His tool, the wandering Beggar, made last night
A plain confession, such as leaves no doubt,
Knowing what otherwise we know too well,
That she revealed the truth. Stand by me now;
For rather would I have a nest of vipers
Between my breast-plate and my skin, than make
Oswald my special enemy, if you
Deny me your support.

Lacy. We have been fooled—
But for the motive?

Wal. Natures such as his
Spin motives out of their own bowels, Lacy!
I learned this when I was a Confessor.
I know him well; there needs no other motive
Than that most strange incontinence in crime
Which haunts this Oswald. Power is life to him
And breath and being; where he cannot govern,
He will destroy.

Lacy. To have been trapped like moles!—
Yes, you are right, we need not hunt for motives:
There is no crime from which this man would shrink;
He recks not human law; and I have noticed
That often when the name of God is uttered,
A sudden blankness overspreads his face.

Len. Yet, reasoner as he is, his pride has built
Some uncouth superstition of its own.

Wal. I have seen traces of it.

Len. Once he headed
A band of Pirates in the Norway seas;
And when the King of Denmark summoned him
To the oath of fealty, I well remember,
'Twas a strange answer that he made; he said,
"I hold of Spirits, and the Sun in heaven."

Lacy. He is no madman.

Wal. A most subtle doctor
Were that man, who could draw the line that parts
Pride and her daughter, Cruelty, from Madness,
That should be scourged, not pitied. Restless Minds,
Such Minds as find amid their fellow-men
No heart that loves them, none that they can love,
Will turn perforce and seek for sympathy
In dim relation to imagined Beings.

One of the Band. What if he mean to offer up our Captain
An expiation and a sacrifice
To those infernal fiends!

Wal. Now, if the event
Should be as Lennox has foretold, then swear.

My Friends, his heart shall have as many wounds
As there are daggers here.
Lacy. What need of swearing!
One of the Band. Let us away!
Another. Away!
A third. Hark! how the horns
Of those Scotch Rovers echo through the vale.
Lacy. Stay you behind; and when the sun is down,
Light up this beacon.
One of the Band. You shall be obeyed.
[*They go out together.*

SCENE—*The Wood on the edge of the Moor.*

MARMADUKE (*alone*).

Mar. Deep, deep and vast, vast beyond human thought,
Yet calm.—I could believe, that there was here
The only quiet heart on earth. In terror,
Remembered terror, there is peace and rest.

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Ha! my dear Captain.
Mar. A later meeting, Oswald,
Would have been better timed.
Osw. Alone, I see;
You have done your duty. I had hopes, which now
I feel that you will justify.
Mar. I had fears,
From which I have freed myself—but 'tis my wish
To be alone, and therefore we must part.
Osw. Nay, then—I am mistaken. There's a weakness
About you still; you talk of solitude—
I am your friend.
Mar. What need of this assurance
At any time? and why given now?
Osw. Because
You are now in truth my Master; you have taught me
What there is not another living man
Had strength to teach;—and therefore gratitude
Is bold, and would relieve itself by praise.
Mar. Wherefore press this on me?
Osw. Because I feel
That you have shown, and by a signal instance,
How they who would be just must seek the rule
By diving for it into their own bosoms.
To-day you have thrown off a tyranny
That lives but in the torpid acquiescence
Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of the world's masters, with the musty rules
By which they uphold their craft from age to age:
You have obeyed the only law that sense
Submits to recognise; the immediate law,
From the clear light of circumstances, flashed
Upon an independent Intellect.
Henceforth new prospects open on your path;
Your faculties should grow with the demand;
I still will be your friend, will cleave to you
Through good and evil, obloquy and scorn,
Oft as they dare to follow on your steps.
Mar. I would be left alone.
Osw. (*exultingly*). I know your motives!
I am not of the world's presumptuous judges,
Who damn where they can neither see nor feel,
With a hard-hearted ignorance; your struggles
I witnessed, and now hail your victory.
Mar. Spare me awhile that greeting.
Osw. It may be,
That some there are, squeamish half-thinking cowards,
Who will turn pale upon you, call you murderer,
And you will walk in solitude among them.
A mighty evil for a strong-built mind!—
Join twenty tapers of unequal height
And light them joined, and you will see the less
How 'twill burn down the taller; and they all
Shall prey upon the tallest. Solitude!—
The Eagle lives in Solitude.
Mar. Even so,
The Sparrow so on the housetop, and I,
The weakest of God's creatures, stand resolved
To abide the issue of my act, alone.
Osw. *Now* would you? and for ever?—My young Friend,
As time advances either we become
The prey or masters of our own past deeds.
Fellowship we *must* have, willing or no;

And if good Angels fail, slack in their duty,
Substitutes, turn our faces where we may,
Are still forthcoming ; some which, though they bear
Ill names, can render no ill services,
In recompense for what themselves required.
So meet extremes in this mysterious world,
And opposites thus melt into each other.
Mar. Time, since Man first drew breath, has never moved
With such a weight upon his wings as now ;
But they will soon be lightened.
Osw. Ay, look up—
Cast round you your mind's eye, and you will learn
Fortitude is the child of Enterprise :
Great actions move our admiration, chiefly
Because they carry in themselves an earnest
That we can suffer greatly.
Mar. Very true.
Osw. Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle—this way or that—
'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed :
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And shares the nature of infinity.
Mar. Truth—and I feel it.
Osw. What ! if you had bid
Eternal farewell to unmingled joy
And the light dancing of the thoughtless heart ;
It is the toy of fools, and little fit
For such a world as this. The wise abjure
All thoughts whose idle composition lives
In the entire forgetfulness of pain.
—I see I have disturbed you.
Mar. By no means.
Osw. Compassion !—pity !—pride can do without them ;
And what if you should never know them more !—
He is a puny soul who, feeling pain,
Finds ease because another feels it too.
If e'er I open out this heart of mine
It shall be for a nobler end—to teach
And not to purchase puling sympathy.
—Nay, you are pale.
Mar. It may be so.
Osw. Remorse—
It cannot live with thought ; think on, think on,
And it will die. What ! in this universe,
Where the least things control the greatest, where
The faintest breath that breathes can move a world ;
What ! feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed,
A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been
Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.
Mar. Now, whither are you wandering ? That a man
So used to suit his language to the time,
Should thus so widely differ from himself—
It is most strange.
Osw. Murder !—what's in the word !—
I have no cases by me ready made
To fit all deeds. Carry him to the Camp !—
A shallow project ;—you of late have seen
More deeply, taught us that the institutes
Of Nature, by a cunning usurpation
Banished from human intercourse, exist
Only in our relations to the brutes
That make the fields their dwelling. If a snake
Crawl from beneath our feet we do not ask
A license to destroy him : our good governors
Hedge in the life of every pest and plague
That bears the shape of man ; and for what purpose,
But to protect themselves from extirpation ?—
This flimsy barrier you have overleaped.
Mar. My Office is fulfilled—the Man is now
Delivered to the Judge of all things.
Osw. Dead !
Mar. I have borne my burthen to its destined end.
Osw. This instant we'll return to our companions—
Oh how I long to see their faces again !

Enter IDONEA, *with* Pilgrims *who continue their journey.*

Idon. (*after some time*). What, Marmaduke ! now thou art mine for ever.
And Oswald, too ! (*To* MARMADUKE). On will we to my Father
With the glad tidings which this day hath brought ;
We'll go together, and, such proof received
Of his own rights restored, his gratitude
To God above will make him feel for ours.
Osw. I interrupt you ?
Idon. Think not so.

Mar. Idonea,
That I should ever live to see this moment!
Idon. Forgive me.—Oswald knows it all—he knows,
Each word of that unhappy letter fell
As a blood drop from my heart.
Osw. 'Twas even so.
Mar. I have much to say, but for whose ear?—not thine.
Idon. Ill can I bear that look—Plead for me, Oswald!
You are my Father's Friend.
(*To* MARMADUKE). Alas, you know not,
And never *can* you know, how much he loved me.
Twice had he been to me a father, twice
Had given me breath, and was I not to be
His daughter, once his daughter? could I withstand
His pleading face, and feel his clasping arms,
And hear his prayer that I would not forsake him
In his old age—— [*Hides her face.*
Mar. Patience—Heaven grant me patience!—
She weeps, she weeps—*my* brain shall burn for hours
Ere *I* can shed a tear.
Idon. I was a woman;
And, balancing the hopes that are the dearest
To womankind with duty to my Father,
I yielded up those precious hopes, which nought
On earth could else have wrested from me;—if erring,
Oh let me be forgiven!
Mar. I *do* forgive thee.
Idon. But take me to your arms—this breast, alas!
It throbs, and you have a heart that does not feel it.
Mar. (*exultingly*). She is innocent.
[*He embraces her.*
Osw. (*aside*). Were I a Moralist,
I should make wondrous revolution here;
It were a quaint experiment to show
The beauty of truth— [*Addressing them.*
I see I interrupt you;
I shall have business with you, Marmaduke;
Follow me to the Hostel. [*Exit* OSWALD.
Idon. Marmaduke,
This is a happy day. My Father soon
Shall sun himself before his native doors;
The lame, the hungry, will be welcome there.
No more shall he complain of wasted strength,
Of thoughts that fail, and a decaying heart;
His good works will be balm and life to him.
Mar. This is most strange!—I know not what it was,
But there was something which most plainly said,
That thou wert innocent.
Idon. How innocent!—
Oh heavens! you've been deceived.
Mar. Thou art a Woman,
To bring perdition on the universe.
Idon. Already I've been punished to the height
Of my offence. [*Smiling affectionately.*
I see you love me still,
The labours of my hand are still your joy;
Bethink you of the hour when on your shoulder
I hung this belt.
[*Pointing to the belt on which was suspended* HERBERT'S *scrip.*
Mar. Mercy of Heaven! [*Sinks.*
Idon. What ails you! [*Distractedly.*
Mar. The scrip that held his food, and I forgot
To give it back again!
Idon. What mean your words?
Mar. I know not what I said—all may be well.
Idon. That smile hath life in it!
Mar. This road is perilous;
I will attend you to a Hut that stands
Near the wood's edge—rest there to-night, I pray you:
For me, I have business, as you heard, with Oswald,
But will return to you by break of day.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE—*A desolate prospect—a ridge of rocks—a Chapel on the summit of one—Moon behind the rocks—night stormy—irregular sound of a Bell*—HERBERT *enters exhausted.*

Her. That Chapel-bell in mercy seemed to guide me,
But now it mocks my steps; its fitful stroke

Can scarcely be the work of human hands.
Hear me, ye Men, upon the cliffs, if such
There be who pray nightly before the Altar.
Oh that I had but strength to reach the place!
My Child—my child—dark—dark—I faint—this wind—
These stifling blasts—God help me!

Enter ELDRED.

Eld. Better this bare rock,
Though it were tottering over a man's head,
Than a tight case of dungeon walls for shelter
From such rough dealing.
[*A moaning voice is heard.*
Ha! what sound is that?
Trees creaking in the wind (but none are here)
Send forth such noises—and that weary bell!
Surely some evil Spirit abroad to-night
Is ringing it—'twould stop a Saint in prayer,
And that—what is it? never was sound so like
A human groan. Ha! what is here? Poor Man—
Murdered! alas! speak—speak, I am your friend:
No answer—hush—lost wretch, he lifts his hand
And lays it to his heart—(*Kneels to him*). I pray you speak!
What has befallen you?
Her. (*feebly*). A stranger has done this,
And in the arms of a stranger I must die.
Eld. Nay, think not so: come, let me raise you up: [*Raises him.*
This is a dismal place—well—that is well—
I was too fearful—take me for your guide
And your support—my hut is not far off.
[*Draws him gently off the stage.*

SCENE—*A room in the Hostel*—MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD.

Mar. But for Idonea!—I have cause to think
That she is innocent.
Osw. Leave that thought awhile,
As one of those beliefs, which in their hearts
Lovers lock up as pearls, though oft no better
Than feathers clinging to their points of passion.
This day's event has laid on me the duty
Of opening out my story; you must hear it,
And without further preface.—In my youth,
Except for that abatement which is paid
By envy as a tribute to desert,
I was the pleasure of all hearts, the darling
Of every tongue—as you are now. You've heard
That I embarked for Syria. On our voyage
Was hatched among the crew a foul Conspiracy
Against my honour, in the which our Captain
Was, I believed, prime Agent. The wind fell;
We lay becalmed week after week, until
The water of the vessel was exhausted;
I felt a double fever in my veins,
Yet rage suppressed itself;—to a deep stillness
Did my pride tame my pride;—for many days,
On a dead sea under a burning sky,
I brooded o'er my injuries, deserted
By man and nature;—if a breeze had blown,
It might have found its way into my heart,
And I had been—no matter—do you mark me?
Mar. Quick—to the point—if any untold crime
Doth haunt your memory.
Osw. Patience, hear me further!—
One day in silence did we drift at noon
By a bare rock, narrow, and white, and bare;
No food was there, no drink, no grass, no shade,
No tree, nor jutting eminence, nor form
Inanimate large as the body of man,
Nor any living thing whose lot of life
Might stretch beyond the measure of one moon.
To dig for water on the spot, the Captain
Landed with a small troop, myself being one:
There I reproached him with his treachery.
Imperious at all times, his temper rose;
He struck me; and that instant had I killed him,
And put an end to his insolence, but my Comrades
Rushed in between us: then did I insist
(All hated him, and I was stung to madness)

That we should leave him there, alive!—we did so.
Mar. And he was famished?
Osw. Naked was the spot;
Methinks I see it now—how in the sun
Its stony surface glittered like a shield;
And in that miserable place we left him,
Alone but for a swarm of minute creatures
Not one of which could help him while alive,
Or mourn him dead.
Mar. A man by men cast off,
Left without burial! nay, not dead nor dying,
But standing, walking, stretching forth his arms,
In all things like ourselves, but in the agony
With which he called for mercy; and—even so—
He was forsaken?
Osw. There is a power in sounds:
The cries he uttered might have stopped the boat
That bore us through the water——
Mar. You returned
Upon that dismal hearing—did you not?
Osw. Some scoffed at him with hellish mockery,
And laughed so loud it seemed that the smooth sea
Did from some distant region echo us.
Mar. We all are of one blood, our veins are filled
At the same poisonous fountain!
Osw. 'Twas an island
Only by sufferance of the winds and waves,
Which with their foam could cover it at will.
I know not how he perished; but the calm,
The same dead calm, continued many days.
Mar. But his own crime had brought on him this doom,
His wickedness prepared it; these expedients
Are terrible, yet ours is not the fault.
Osw. The man was famished, and was innocent!
Mar. Impossible!
Osw. The man had never wronged me.
Mar. Banish the thought, crush it, and be at peace.
His guilt was marked—these things could never be
Were there not eyes that see, and for good ends,
Where ours are baffled.
Osw. I had been deceived.
Mar. And from that hour the miserable man
No more was heard of?
Osw. I had been betrayed.
Mar. And he found no deliverance!
Osw. The Crew
Gave me a hearty welcome; they had laid
The plot to rid themselves, at any cost,
Of a tyrannic Master whom they loathed.
So we pursued our voyage: when we landed,
The tale was spread abroad; my power at once
Shrunk from me; plans and schemes, and lofty hopes—
All vanished. I gave way—do you attend?
Mar. The Crew deceived you?
Osw. Nay, command yourself.
Mar. It is a dismal night—how the wind howls!
Osw. I hid my head within a Convent, there
Lay passive as a dormouse in mid-winter.
That was no life for me—I was o'erthrown,
But not destroyed.
Mar. The proofs—you ought to have seen
The guilt—have touched it—felt it at your heart—
As I have done.
Osw. A fresh tide of Crusaders
Drove by the place of my retreat: three nights
Did constant meditation dry my blood;
Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
Through words and things, a dim and perilous way;
And, wheresoe'er I turned me, I beheld
A slavery compared to which the dungeon
And clanking chains are perfect liberty.
You understand me—I was comforted;
I saw that every possible shape of action
Might lead to good—I saw it and burst forth
Thirsting for some of those exploits that fill
The earth for sure redemption of lost peace.
[*Marking* MARMADUKE'S *countenance.*
Nay, you have had the worst. Ferocity
Subsided in a moment; like a wind
That drops down dead out of a sky it vexed.
And yet I had within me evermore
A salient spring of energy; I mounted

From action up to action with a mind
That never rested—without meat or drink
Have I lived many days—my sleep was bound
To purposes of reason—not a dream
But had a continuity and substance
That waking life had never power to give.
Mar. O wretched Human-kind !—Until the mystery
Of all this world is solved, well may we envy
The worm, that, underneath a stone whose weight
Would crush the lion's paw with mortal anguish,
Doth lodge, and feed, and coil, and sleep, in safety.
Fell not the wrath of Heaven upon those traitors ?
Osw. Give not to them a thought. From Palestine
We marched to Syria : oft I left the Camp,
When all that multitude of hearts was still,
And followed on, through woods of gloomy cedar,
Into deep chasms troubled by roaring streams ;
Or from the top of Lebanon surveyed
The moonlight desert, and the moonlight sea :
In these my lonely wanderings I perceived
What mighty objects do impress their forms
To elevate our intellectual being ;
And felt, if aught on earth deserves a curse,
'Tis that worst principle of ill which dooms
A thing so great to perish self-consumed.
—So much for my remorse !
Mar. [illegible] Unhappy Man !
Osw. When from these forms I turned to contemplate
The World's opinions and her usages,
I seemed a Being who had passed alone
Into a region of futurity,
Whose natural element was freedom——
Mar. [illegible] Stop—
I may not, cannot, follow thee.
Osw. [illegible] You must.
I had been nourished by the sickly food
Of popular applause. I now perceived
That we are praised, only as men in us
Do recognise some image of themselves,
An abject counterpart of what they are,
Or the empty thing that they would wish to be.
I felt that merit has no surer test
Than obloquy ; that, if we wish to serve
The world in substance, not deceive by show,
We must become obnoxious to its hate,
Or fear disguised in simulated scorn.
Mar. I pity, can forgive, you ; but those wretches—
That monstrous perfidy !
Osw. [illegible] Keep down your wrath.
False Shame discarded, spurious Fame despised,
Twin sisters both of Ignorance, I found
Life stretched before me smooth as some broad way
Cleared for a monarch's progress. Priests might spin
Their veil, but not for me—'twas in fit place
Among its kindred cobwebs. I had been,
And in that dream had left my native land,
One of Love's simple bondsmen—the soft chain
Was off for ever ; and the men, from whom
This liberation came, you would destroy :
Join me in thanks for their blind services.
Mar. 'Tis a strange aching that, when we would curse
And cannot.—You have betrayed me—I have done—
I am content—I know that he is guiltless—
That both are guiltless, without spot or stain,
Mutually consecrated. Poor old Man !
And I had heart for this, because thou lovedst
Her who from very infancy had been
Light to thy path, warmth to thy blood !—Together [*Turning to* OSWALD.
We propped his steps, he leaned upon us both.
Osw. Ay, we are coupled by a chain of adamant ;
Let us be fellow-labourers, then, to enlarge
Man's intellectual empire. We subsist
In slavery ; all is slavery ; we receive
Laws, but we ask not whence those laws have come ;
We need an inward sting to goad us on.
Mar. Have you betrayed me ? Speak to that.
Osw. The mask,

Which for a season I have stooped to wear,
Must be cast off.—Know then that I was urged,
(For other impulse let it pass) was driven,
To seek for sympathy, because I saw
In you a mirror of my youthful self;
I would have made us equal once again,
But that was a vain hope. You have struck home,
With a few drops of blood cut short the business;
Therein for ever you must yield to me.
But what is done will save you from the blank
Of living without knowledge that you live:
Now you are suffering—for the future day,
'Tis his who will command it.—Think of my story—
Herbert is *innocent.*

Mar. (*in a faint voice, and doubtingly*).
You do but echo
My own wild words?

Osw. Young Man, the seed must lie
Hid in the earth, or there can be no harvest;
'Tis Nature's law. What I have done in darkness
I will avow before the face of day.
Herbert *is* innocent.

Mar. What fiend could prompt
This action? Innocent!—oh, breaking heart!—
Alive or dead, I'll find him. [*Exit.*

Osw. Alive—perdition! [*Exit.*

SCENE—*The inside of a poor Cottage.*

ELEANOR *and* IDONEA *seated.*

Idon. The storm beats hard—Mercy for poor or rich,
Whose heads are shelterless in such a night!

A Voice without. Holla! to bed, good Folks, within!

Elea. O save us!

Idon. What can this mean?

Elea. Alas, for my poor husband!—
We'll have a counting of our flocks to-morrow;
The wolf keeps festival these stormy nights:
Be calm, sweet Lady, they are wassailers
[*The voices die away in the distance.*
Returning from their Feast—my heart beats so—
A noise at midnight does *so* frighten me.

Idon. Hush! [*Listening.*

Elea. They are gone. On such a night my husband,
Dragged from his bed, was cast into a dungeon,
Where, hid from me, he counted many years,
A criminal in no one's eyes but theirs—
Not even in theirs—whose brutal violence
So dealt with him.

Idon. I have a noble Friend
First among youths of knightly breeding, One
Who lives but to protect the weak or injured.
There again! [*Listening.*

Elea. 'Tis my husband's foot. Good Eldred
Has a kind heart; but his imprisonment
Has made him fearful, and he'll never be
The man he was.

Idon. I will retire;—good night!
[*She goes within.*

Enter ELDRED (*hides a bundle*).

Eld. Not yet in bed, Eleanor!—there are stains in that frock which must be washed out.

Elea. What has befallen you?

Eld. I am belated, and you must know the cause—(*speaking low*) that is the blood of an unhappy Man.

Elea. Oh! we are undone for ever.

Eld. Heaven forbid that I should lift my hand against any man. Eleanor, I have shed tears to-night, and it comforts me to think of it.

Elea. Where, where is he?

Eld. I have done him no harm, but—— it will be forgiven me; it would not have been so once.

Elea. You have not *buried* anything? You are no richer than when you left me?

Eld. Be at peace; I am innocent.

Elea. Then God be thanked—
[*A short pause; she falls upon his neck.*

Eld. To-night I met with an old Man lying stretched upon the ground—a sad spectacle: I raised him up with a hope that we might shelter and restore him.

Elea. (*as if ready to run*). Where is he? You were not able to bring him *all* the way with you; let us return, I can help you.

[ELDRED *shakes his head.*

Eld. He did not seem to wish for life: as I was struggling on, by the light of the moon I saw the stains of blood upon my clothes—he waved his hand, as if it were all useless; and I let him sink again to the ground.

Elea. Oh that I had been by your side!

Eld. I tell you his hands and his body were cold—how could I disturb his last moments? he strove to turn from me as if he wished to settle into sleep.

Elea. But, for the stains of blood—

Eld. He must have fallen, I fancy, for his head was cut; but I think his malady was cold and hunger.

Elea. Oh, Eldred, I shall never be able to look up at this roof in storm or fair but I shall tremble.

Eld. Is it not enough that my ill stars have kept me abroad to-night till this hour? I come home, and this is my comfort!

Elea. But did he say nothing which might have set you at ease?

Eld. I thought he grasped my hand while he was muttering something about his Child—his Daughter—(*starting as if he heard a noise*). What is that?

Elea. Eldred, you are a father.

Eld. God knows what was in my heart, and will not curse my son for my sake.

Elea. But you prayed by him? you waited the hour of his release?

Eld. The night was wasting fast; I have no friend; I am spited by the world—his wound terrified me—if I had brought him along with me, and he had died in my arms!——I am sure I heard something breathing—and this chair!

Elea. Oh, Eldred, you will die alone. You will have nobody to close your eyes—no hand to grasp your dying hand—I shall be in my grave. A curse will attend us all.

Eld. Have you forgot your own troubles when I was in the dungeon?

Elea. And you left him alive?

Eld. Alive!—the damps of death were upon him—he could not have survived an hour.

Elea. In the cold, cold night.

Eld. (*in a savage tone*). Ay, and his head was bare; I suppose you would have had me lend my bonnet to cover it.—You will never rest till I am brought to a felon' end.

Elea. Is there nothing to be done? can not we go to the Convent?

Eld. Ay, and say at once that I murdere him!

Elea. Eldred, I know that ours is th only house upon the Waste; let us tak heart; this Man may be rich; and coul he be saved by our means, his gratitud may reward us.

Eld. 'Tis all in vain.

Elea. But let us make the attempt. Thi old Man may have a wife, and he may hav children—let us return to the spot; we ma restore him, and his eyes may yet open upo those that love him.

Eld. He will never open them more even when he spoke to me, he kept then firmly sealed as if he had been blind.

Idon. (*rushing out*). It is, it is, m Father—

Eld. We are betrayed (*looking a* IDONEA).

Elea. His Daughter!—God have mercy (*turning to* IDONEA).

Idon. (*sinking down*). Oh! lift me u and carry me to the place.
You are safe; the whole world shall nc harm you.

Elea. This Lady is his Daughter.

Eld. (*moved*). I'll lead you to the spot.

Idon. (*springing up*). Alive!—you hear him breathe? quick, quick—

[*Exeun*

ACT V.

SCENE—*A wood on the edge of the Wast*

Enter OSWALD *and a* Forester.

For. He leaned upon the bridge tha spans the glen,
And down into the bottom cast his eye,
That fastened there, as it would check th current.

Osw. He listened too; did you not sa he listened?

For. As if there came such moanin from the flood
As is heard often after stormy nights.

Osw. But did he utter nothing?

For. See him there

MARMADUKE *appearing.*

Mar. Buzz, buzz, ye black and winged freebooters;
That is no substance which ye settle on!
For. His senses play him false; and see, his arms
Outspread, as if to save himself from falling!—
Some terrible phantom I believe is now
Passing before him, such as God will not
Permit to visit any but a man
Who has been guilty of some horrid crime.
[MARMADUKE *disappears.*
Osw. The game is up!—
For. If it be needful, Sir,
will assist you to lay hands upon him.
Osw. No, no, my Friend, you may pursue your business—
'Tis a poor wretch of an unsettled mind,
Who has a trick of straying from his keepers;
We must be gentle. Leave him to my care. [*Exit* Forester.
f his own eyes play false with him, these freaks
Of fancy shall be quickly tamed by mine;
The goal is reached. My Master shall become
A shadow of myself—made by myself.

SCENE—*The edge of the Moor.*

MARMADUKE *and* ELDRED *enter from opposite sides.*

Mar. (*raising his eyes and perceiving* ELDRED). In any corner of this savage Waste,
Have you, good Peasant, seen a blind old Man?
Eld. I heard——
Mar. You heard him, where? when heard him?
Eld. As you know,
The first hours of last night were rough with storm:
had been out in search of a stray heifer;
Returning late, I heard a moaning sound;
Then, thinking that my fancy had deceived me,
hurried on, when straight a second moan,
A human voice distinct, struck on my ear,
o guided, distant a few steps, I found
n aged Man, and such as you describe.
Mar. You heard!—he called you to him? Of all men
The best and kindest!—but where is he? guide me,
That I may see him.
Eld. On a ridge of rocks
A lonesome Chapel stands, deserted now:
The bell is left, which no one dares remove
And, when the stormy wind blows o'er the peak,
It rings, as if a human hand were there
To pull the cord. I guess he must have heard it;
And it had led him towards the precipice,
To climb up to the spot whence the sound came;
But he had failed through weakness. From his hand
His staff had dropped, and close upon the brink
Of a small pool of water he was laid,
As if he had stooped to drink, and so remained
Without the strength to rise.
Mar. Well, well, he lives,
And all is safe: what said he?
Eld. But few words
He only spake to me of a dear Daughter,
Who, so he feared, would never see him more;
And of a Stranger to him, One by whom
He had been sore misused; but he forgave
The wrong and the wrong-doer. You are troubled—
Perhaps you are his son?
Mar. The All-seeing knows,
I did not think he had a living Child.—
But whither did you carry him?
Eld. He was torn,
His head was bruised, and there was blood about him——
Mar. That was no work of mine.
Eld. Nor was it mine.
Mar. But had he strength to walk? I could have borne him
A thousand miles.
Eld. I am in poverty,
And know how busy are the tongues of men;
My heart was willing, Sir, but I am one
Whose good deeds will not stand by their own light;
And, though it smote me more than words can tell,
I left him.

Mar. I believe that there are phantoms,
That in the shape of man do cross our path
On evil instigation, to make sport
Of our distress—and thou art one of them!
But things substantial have so pressed on me——
Eld. My wife and children came into my mind.
Mar. Oh Monster! Monster! there are three of us,
And we shall howl together.
[*After a pause and in a feeble voice.*
I am deserted
At my worst need, my crimes have in a net
(*Pointing to* ELDRED) Entangled this poor man.—Where was it? where?
[*Dragging him along.*
Eld. 'Tis needless; spare your violence.
His Daughter——
Mar. Ay, in the word a thousand scorpions lodge
This old man *had* a Daughter.
Eld. To the spot
I hurried back with her.—O save me, Sir,
From such a journey!——there was a black tree,
A single tree; she thought it was her Father.—
Oh Sir, I would not see that hour again
For twenty lives. The daylight dawned, and now—
Nay; hear my tale, 'tis fit that you should hear it—
As we approached, a solitary crow
Rose from the spot;—the Daughter clapped her hands,
And then I heard a shriek so terrible
[MARMADUKE *shrinks back.*
The startled bird quivered upon the wing.
Mar. Dead, dead!—
Eld. (*after a pause*). A dismal matter, Sir, for me,
And seems the like for you; if 'tis your wish,
I'll lead you to his Daughter; but 'twere best
That she should be prepared; I'll go before.
Mar. There will be need of preparation.
[ELDRED *goes off.*
Elea. (*enters*). Master!
Your limbs sink under you, shall I support you?
Mar. (*taking her arm*). Woman, I've lent my body to the service
Which now thou tak'st upon thee. God forbid
That thou shouldst ever meet a like occasion
With such a purpose in thine heart as mine was.
Elea. Oh, why have I to do with things like these? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to the door of* ELDRED'S *cottage*—IDONEA *seated*—*enter* ELDRED.

Eld. Your Father, Lady, from a wilful hand
Has met unkindness; so indeed he told me,
And you remember such was my report:
From what has just befallen me I have cause
To fear the very worst.
Idon. My Father is dead;
Why dost thou come to me with words like these?
Eld. A wicked Man should answer for his crimes.
Idon. Thou seest me what I am.
Eld. It was most heinous,
And doth call out for vengeance.
Idon. Do not add,
I prithee, to the harm thou'st done already.
Eld. Hereafter you will thank me for this service.
Hard by, a Man I met, who, from plain proofs
Of interfering Heaven, I have no doubt,
Laid hands upon your Father. Fit it were
You should prepare to meet him.
Idon. I have nothing
To do with others; help me to my Father—
[*She turns and sees* MARMADUKE *leaning on* ELEANOR—*throws herself upon his neck, and after some time,*
In joy I met thee, but a few hours past;
And thus we meet again; one human stay
Is left me still in thee. Nay, shake not so.
Mar. In such a wilderness—to see no thing,
No, not the pitying moon!
Idon. And perish so.
Mar. Without a dog to moan for him.
Idon. Think not of it,
But enter there and see him how he sleeps,
Tranquil as he had died in his own bed.
Mar. Tranquil—why not?
Idon. Oh, peace!

Mar. He is at peace ;
His body is at rest : there was a plot,
A hideous plot, against the soul of man :
It took effect—and yet I baffled it,
In *some* degree.
Idon. Between us stood, I thought,
A cup of consolation, filled from Heaven
For both our needs ; must I, and in thy presence,
Alone partake of it ?—Belovèd Marmaduke !
Mar. Give me a reason why the wisest thing
That the earth owns shall never choose to die,
But some one must be near to count his groans.
The wounded deer retires to solitude,
And dies in solitude : all things but man,
All die in solitude.
[*Moving towards the cottage door.*
Mysterious God,
If she had never lived I had not done it !—
Idon. Alas, the thought of such a cruel death
Has overwhelmed him.—I must follow.
Eld. Lady !
You will do well ; (*she goes*) unjust suspicion may
Cleave to this Stranger : if, upon his entering,
The dead Man heave a groan, or from his side
Uplift his hand—that would be evidence.
Elea. Shame ! Eldred, shame !
Mar. (*both returning*). The dead have but one face (*to himself*).
And such a Man—so meek and unoffending—
Helpless and harmless as a babe : a Man,
By obvious signal to the world's protection,
Solemnly dedicated—to decoy him !—
Idon. Oh, had you seen him living !—
Mar. I (so filled
With horror is this world) am unto thee
The thing most precious, that it now contains :
Therefore through me alone must be revealed
By whom thy Parent was destroyed, Idonea !
I have the proofs !—
Idon. O miserable Father !
Thou didst command me to bless all mankind ;
Nor to this moment, have I ever wished
Evil to any living thing ; but hear me,
Hear me, ye Heavens !—(*kneeling*)—may vengeance haunt the fiend
For this most cruel murder : let him live
And move in terror of the elements ;
The thunder send him on his knees to prayer
In the open streets, and let him think he sees,
If e'er he entereth the house of God,
The roof, self-moved, unsettling o'er his head ;
And let him, when he would lie down at night,
Point to his wife the blood-drops on his pillow !
Mar. My voice was silent, but my heart hath joined thee.
Idon. (*leaning on* MARMADUKE). Left to the mercy of that savage Man !
How could he call upon his Child !—O Friend ! [*Turns to* MARMADUKE.
My faithful true and only Comforter.
Mar. Ay, come to me and weep. (*He kisses her.*) (*To* ELDRED.) Yes, Varlet, look,
The devils at such sights do clap their hands.
[ELDRED *retires alarmed.*
Idon. Thy vest is torn, thy cheek is deadly pale ;
Hast thou pursued the monster ?
Mar. I have found him.—
Oh ! would that thou hadst perished in the flames !
Idon. Here art thou, then can I be desolate ?—
Mar. There was a time, when this protecting hand
Availed against the mighty ; never more
Shall blessings wait upon a deed of mine.
Idon. Wild words for me to hear, for me, an orphan
Committed to thy guardianship by Heaven ;
And, if thou hast forgiven me, let me hope,
In this deep sorrow, trust, that I am thine
For closer care ;—here, is no malady.
[*Taking his arm.*
Mar. There, *is* a malady—
(*Striking his heart and forehead*). And here, and here,
A mortal malady.—I am accurst :
All nature curses me, and in my heart
Thy curse is fixed ; the truth must be laid bare.
It must be told, and borne. I am the man,
(Abused, betrayed, but how it matters not)

Presumptuous above all that ever breathed,
Who, casting as I thought a guilty Person
Upon Heaven's righteous judgment, did become
An instrument of Fiends. Through me, through me
Thy Father perished.
Idon. Perished—by what mischance?
Mar. Beloved!—if I dared, so would I call thee—
Conflict must cease, and, in thy frozen heart,
The extremes of suffering meet in absolute peace. [*He gives her a letter.*

Idon. (*reads*). "Be not surprised if you hear that some signal judgment has befallen the man who calls himself your father; he is now with me, as his signature will shew: abstain from conjecture till you see me.

"HERBERT.
"MARMADUKE."

The writing Oswald's; the signature my Father's:
(*Looks steadily at the paper*). And here is yours,—or do my eyes deceive me?
You have then seen my Father?
Mar. He has leaned
Upon this arm.
Idon. You led him towards the Convent?
Mar. That Convent was Stone-Arthur Castle. Thither
We were his guides. I on that night resolved
That he should wait thy coming till the day
Of resurrection.
Idon. Miserable Woman,
Too quickly moved, too easily giving way,
I put denial on thy suit, and hence,
With the disastrous issue of last night,
Thy perturbation, and these frantic words.
Be calm, I pray thee!
Mar. Oswald——
Idon. Name him not.

Enter female Beggar.

Beg. And he is dead!—that Moor—how shall I cross it?
By night, by day, never shall I be able
To travel half a mile alone.—Good Lady!
Forgive me!—Saints forgive me. Had I thought
It would have come to this!—
Idon. What brings you hither? speak!
Beg. (*pointing to* MARMADUKE). This innocent Gentleman. Sweet heavens! I told him
Such tales of your dead Father!—God is my judge,
I thought there was no harm: but that bad Man,
He bribed me with his gold, and looked so fierce.
Mercy! I said I know not what—oh pity me—
I said, sweet Lady, you were not his Daughter—
Pity me, I am haunted;—thrice this day
My conscience made me wish to be struck blind;
And then I would have prayed, and had no voice.
Idon. (*to* MARMADUKE). Was it my Father?—no, no, no, for he
Was meek and patient, feeble, old and blind,
Helpless, and loved me dearer than his life.
—But hear me. For *one* question, I have a heart
That will sustain me. Did you murder him?
Mar. No, not by stroke of arm. But learn the process:
Proof after proof was pressed upon me; guilt
Made evident, as seemed, by blacker guilt,
Whose impious folds enwrapped even thee; and truth
And innocence, embodied in his looks,
His words and tones and gestures, did but serve
With me to aggravate his crimes, and heaped
Ruin upon the cause for which they pleaded.
Then pity crossed the path of my resolve:
Confounded, I looked up to Heaven, and cast,
Idonea! thy blind Father, on the Ordeal
Of the bleak Waste—left him—and so he died!—
[IDONEA *sinks senseless;* Beggar, ELEANOR, *etc., crowd round, and bear her off.*
Why may we speak these things, and do no more;
Why should a thrust of the arm have such a power,
And words that tell these things be heard in vain?

She is not dead. Why!—if I loved this Woman,
I would take care she never woke again;
But she WILL wake, and she will weep for me,
And say, no blame was mine—and so, poor fool,
Will waste her curses on another name.
[*He walks about distractedly.*

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. (*to himself*). Strong to o'erturn, strong also to build up.
[*To* MARMADUKE.
The starts and sallies of our last encounter
Were natural enough; but that, I trust,
Is all gone by. You have cast off the chains
That fettered your nobility of mind—
Delivered heart and head!
Let us to Palestine;
This is a paltry field for enterprise.
Mar. Ay, what shall we encounter next? This issue—
'Twas nothing more than darkness deepening darkness,
And weakness crowned with the impotence of death!—
Your pupil is, you see, an apt proficient. (*ironically.*)
Start not!—Here is another face hard by;
Come, let us take a peep at both together,
And, with a voice at which the dead will quake,
Resound the praise of your morality—
Of this too much.
[*Drawing* OSWALD *towards the Cottage—stops short at the door.*
Men are there, millions, Oswald,
Who with bare hands would have plucked out thy heart
And flung it to the dogs: but I am raised
Above, or sunk below, all further sense
Of provocation. Leave me, with the weight
Of that old Man's forgiveness on thy heart,
Pressing as heavily as it doth on mine.
Coward I have been; know, there lies not now
Within the compass of a mortal thought,
A deed that I would shrink from;—but to endure,
That is my destiny. May it be thine:
Thy office, thy ambition, be henceforth
To feed remorse, to welcome every sting
Of penitential anguish, yea with tears.
When seas and continents shall lie between us—
The wider space the better—we may find
In such a course fit links of sympathy,
An incommunicable rivalship
Maintained, for peaceful ends beyond our view.
[*Confused voices—several of the band enter—rush upon* OSWALD, *and seize him.*
One of them. I would have dogged him to the jaws of hell—
Osw. Ha! is it so!—That vagrant Hag!—this comes
Of having left a thing like her alive!
[*Aside.*
Several voices. Despatch him!
Osw. If I pass beneath a rock
And shout, and, with the echo of my voice,
Bring down a heap of rubbish, and it crush me,
I die without dishonour. Famished, starved,
A Fool and Coward blended to my wish!
[*Smiles scornfully and exultingly at* MARMADUKE.
Wal. 'Tis done! (*Stabs him*).
Another of the band. The ruthless Traitor!
Mar. A rash deed!—
With that reproof I do resign a station
Of which I have been proud.
Wil. (*approaching* MARMADUKE). O my poor Master!
Mar. Discerning Monitor, my faithful Wilfred,
Why art thou here?
[*Turning to* WALLACE.
Wallace, upon these Borders,
Many there be whose eyes will not want cause
To weep that I am gone. Brothers in arms!
Raise on that dreary Waste a monument
That may record my story: nor let words—
Few must they be, and delicate in their touch
As light itself—be there withheld from Her
Who, through most wicked arts, was made an orphan
By One who would have died a thousand times,
To shield her from a moment's harm. To you,
Wallace and Wilfred, I commend the Lady,
By lowly nature reared, as if to make her
In all things worthier of that noble birth,

Whose long-suspended rights are now on the eve
Of restoration: with your tenderest care
Watch over her, I pray—sustain her——
Several of the band (*eagerly*). Captain!
Mar. No more of that; in silence hear my doom:
A hermitage has furnished fit relief
To some offenders: other penitents,
Less patient in their wretchedness, have fallen,
Like the old Roman, on their own sword's point.
They had their choice: a wanderer *must I* go,
The Spectre of that innocent Man, my guide.
No human ear shall ever hear me speak;
No human dwelling ever give me food,
Or sleep, or rest: but, over waste and wild,
In search of nothing, that this earth can give,
But expiation, will I wander on—
A Man by pain and thought compelled to live,
Yet loathing life—till anger is appeased
In Heaven, and Mercy gives me leave to die.

1795-96.

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

This arose out of my observation of the affecting music of these birds hanging in this way in the London streets during the freshness and stillness of the Spring morning.

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes!

1797.

THE BIRTH OF LOVE

Translated from some French stanzas by Francis Wrangham, and printed in "Poems by Francis Wrangham, M.A."

When Love was born of heavenly line,
What dire intrigues disturbed Cythera's joy!
Till Venus cried, "A mother's heart is mine;
None but myself shall nurse my boy."

But, infant as he was, the child
In that divine embrace enchanted lay;
And, by the beauty of the vase beguiled,
Forgot the beverage—and pined away.

"And must my offspring languish in my sight?"
(Alive to all a mother's pain,
The Queen of Beauty thus her court addressed)
"No: Let the most discreet of all my train
Receive him to her breast:
Think all, he is the God of young delight."

Then Tenderness with Candour joined,
And Gaiety the charming office sought;
Nor even Delicacy stayed behind:
But none of those fair Graces brought

Wherewith to nurse the child—and still he pined.
Some fond hearts to COMPLIANCE seemed inclined;
But she had surely spoiled the boy:
And sad experience forbade a thought
On the wild Goddess of VOLUPTUOUS JOY.

Long undecided lay th' important choice,
Till of the beauteous court, at length, a voice
Pronounced the name of HOPE:—The conscious child
Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.

'Tis said ENJOYMENT (who averred
The charge belonged to her alone)
Jealous that HOPE had been preferred
Laid snares to make the babe her own.

Of INNOCENCE the garb she took,
The blushing mien and downcast look;
And came her services to proffer:
And HOPE (what has not Hope believed!)
By that seducing air deceived,
Accepted of the offer.

It happened that, to sleep inclined,
Deluded HOPE for one short hour
To that false INNOCENCE's power
Her little charge consigned.

The Goddess then her lap with sweetmeats filled
And gave, in handfuls gave, the treacherous store:
A wild delirium first the infant thrilled;
But soon upon her breast he sunk—to wake no more. 1795.

A NIGHT-PIECE

Composed on the road between Nether Stowey and Alfoxden, extempore. I distinctly recollect the very moment when I was struck, as described,—"He looks up—the clouds are split," etc.

———THE sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground—from rock, plant, tree, or tower.
At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up—the clouds are split
Asunder,—and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not!—the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent;—still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.
1798.

WE ARE SEVEN

Written at Alfoxden in the spring of 1798, under circumstances somewhat remarkable. The little girl who is the heroine I met within the area of Goodrich Castle in the year 1793. Having left the Isle of Wight and crossed Salisbury Plain, as mentioned in the preface to "Guilt and Sorrow," I proceeded by Bristol up the Wye, and so on to North Wales, to the Vale of Clwydd, where I spent my summer under the roof of the father of my friend, Robert Jones. In reference to this Poem I will here mention one of the most remarkable facts in my own poetic history and that of Mr. Coleridge. In the spring of the year 1798, he, my Sister, and myself, started from Alfoxden, pretty late in the afternoon, with a view to visit Lenton and the valley of Stones near it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem, to be sent to the New Monthly Magazine set up by Phillips the bookseller, and edited by Dr. Aikin. Accordingly we set off and proceeded along the Quantock Hills towards Watchet, and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the "Ancient Mariner," founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend, Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was

Mr. Coleridge's invention; but certain parts I myself suggested:—for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime, and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvock's Voyages a day or two before that while doubling Cape Horn they frequently saw Albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or fifteen feet. "Suppose," said I, "you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary Spirits of those regions take upon them to avenge the crime." The incident was thought fit for the purpose and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The Gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time; at least, not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together on that, to me, memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular:—

"And listened like a three years' child;
The Mariner had his will."

These trifling contributions, all but one (which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded) slipt out of his mind as they well might. As we endeavoured to proceed conjointly (I speak of the same evening) our respective manners proved so widely different that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. We returned after a few days from a delightful tour, of which I have many pleasant, and some of them droll-enough, recollections. We returned by Dulverton to Alfoxden. The "Ancient Mariner" grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds, and we began to talk of a Volume, which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on supernatural subjects taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through an imaginative medium. Accordingly I wrote "The Idiot Boy," "Her eyes are wild," etc., "We are seven," "The Thorn," and some others. To return to "We are seven," the piece that called forth this note, I composed it while walking in the grove at Alfoxden. My friends will not deem it too trifling to relate that while walking to and fro I composed the last stanza first, having begun with the last line. When it was all but finished, I came in and recited it to Mr. Coleridge and my Sister, and said, "A prefatory stanza must be added, and I should sit down to our little tea-meal with greater pleasure if my task were finished." I mentioned in substance what I wished to be expressed, and Coleridge immediately threw off the stanza thus:—

"A little child, dear brother Jem,"—

I objected to the rhyme, "dear brother Jem," as being ludicrous, but we all enjoyed the joke of hitching-in our friend, James T——'s name, who was familiarly called Jem. He was the brother of the dramatist, and this reminds me of an anecdote which it may be worth while here to notice. The said Jem got a sight of the Lyrical Ballads as it was going through the press at Bristol, during which time I was residing in that city. One evening he came to me with a grave face, and said, "Wordsworth, I have seen the volume that Coleridge and you are about to publish. There is one poem in it which I earnestly entreat you will cancel, for, if published, it will make you everlastingly ridiculous." I answered that I felt much obliged by the interest he took in my good name as a writer, and begged to know what was the unfortunate piece he alluded to. He said, "It is called 'We are seven.'" Nay! said I, that shall take its chance, however, and he left me in despair. I have only to add that in the spring of 1841 I revisited Goodrich Castle, not having seen that part of the Wye since I met the little Girl there in 1793. It would have given me greater pleasure to have found in the neighbouring hamlet traces of one who had interested me so much; but that was impossible, as unfortunately I did not even know her name. The ruin, from its position and features, is a most impressive object. I could not but deeply regret that its solemnity was impaired by a fantastic new Castle set up on a projection of the same ridge, as if to show how far modern art can go in surpassing all that could be done by antiquity and nature with their united graces, remembrances, and associations.

———A SIMPLE Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven!—I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

1798.

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS

"Retine vim istam, falsa enim dicam, si coges."
—Eusebius.

This was suggested in front of Alfoxden. The Boy was a son of my friend, Basil Montagu, who had been two or three years under our care The name of Kilve is from a village on the Bristol Channel, about a mile from Alfoxden; and the name of Liswyn Farm was taken from a beautiful spot on the Wye. When Mr. Coleridge, my Sister, and I, had been visiting the famous John Thelwall, who had taken refuge from politics, after a trial for high treason, with a view to bring up his family by the profits of agriculture, which proved as unfortunate a speculation as that he had fled from, Coleridge and he had both been public lecturers; Coleridge mingling, with his politics, Theology, from which the other elocutionist abstained, unless it were for the sake of a sneer. This quondam community of public employment induced Thelwall to visit Coleridge at Nether Stowey, where he fell in my way. He really was a man of extraordinary talent, an affectionate husband, and a good father. Though brought up in the City, he was truly sensible of the beauty of natural objects. I remember once, when Coleridge, he, and I were seated together upon the turf on the brink of a stream in the most beautiful part of the most beautiful glen of Alfoxden, Coleridge exclaimed, "This is a place to reconcile one to all the jarrings and conflicts of the wide world."—"Nay," said Thelwall, "to make one forget them altogether." The visit of this man to Coleridge was, as I believe Coleridge has related, the occasion of a spy being sent by Government to watch our proceedings, which were, I can say with truth, such as the world at large would have thought ludicrously harmless.

I HAVE a boy of five years old;
His face is fair and fresh to see;
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me—and each trace
Of inward sadness had its charm;
Kilve, thought I, was a favoured place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And, as we talked, I questioned him,
In very idleness.

"Now tell me, had you rather be,"
I said, and took him by the arm,
"On Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?"

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, "At Kilve I'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm."

"Now, little Edward, say why so:
My little Edward, tell me why."—
"I cannot tell, I do not know."—
"Why, this is strange," said I;

"For, here are woods, hills smooth and warm:
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea."

At this, my boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply;
And three times to the child I said,
"Why, Edward, tell me why?"

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And eased his mind with this reply:
"At Kilve there was no weather-cock;
And that's the reason why."

O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

1798.

THE THORN

Written at Alfoxden. Arose out of my observing, on the ridge of Quantock Hill, on a stormy day, a thorn which I had often past, in calm and bright weather, without noticing it. I said to myself, "Cannot I by some invention do as much to make this Thorn permanently an impressive object as the storm has made it to my eyes at this moment?" I began the poem accordingly, and composed it with great rapidity. Sir George Beaumont painted a picture from it which Wilkie thought his best. He gave it me; though when he saw it several times at Rydal Mount afterwards, he said, "I could make a better, and would like to paint the same subject over again." The sky in this picture is nobly done, but it reminds one too much of Wilson. The only fault, however, of any consequence is the female figure, which is too old and decrepit for one likely to frequent an eminence on such a call.

I

"THERE is a Thorn—it looks so old,
In truth, you'd find it hard to say
How it could ever have been young,
It looks so old and grey.
Not higher than a two years' child
It stands erect, this aged Thorn;
No leaves it has, no prickly points;
It is a mass of knotted joints,
A wretched thing forlorn.
It stands erect, and like a stone
With lichens is it overgrown.

II

"Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown,
With lichens to the very top,
And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
A melancholy crop :
Up from the earth these mosses creep,
And this poor Thorn they clasp it round
So close, you'd say that they are bent
With plain and manifest intent
To drag it to the ground ;
And all have joined in one endeavour
To bury this poor Thorn for ever.

III

"High on a mountain's highest ridge,
Where oft the stormy winter gale
Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
It sweeps from vale to vale ;
Not five yards from the mountain path,
This Thorn you on your left espy ;
And to the left, three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water—never dry
Though but of compass small, and bare
To thirsty suns and parching air.

IV

"And, close beside this aged Thorn,
There is a fresh and lovely sight,
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
Just half a foot in height.
All lovely colours there you see,
All colours that were ever seen ;
And mossy network too is there,
As if by hand of lady fair
The work had woven been ;
And cups, the darlings of the eye,
So deep is their vermilion dye.

V

"Ah me ! what lovely tints are there
Of olive green and scarlet bright,
In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
Green, red, and pearly white !
This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss,
Which close beside the Thorn you see,
So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
Is like an infant's grave in size,
As like as like can be :
But never, never any where,
An infant's grave was half so fair.

VI

"Now would you see this aged Thorn,
This pond, and beauteous hill of moss,
You must take care and choose your time
The mountain when to cross.
For oft there sits between the heap
So like an infant's grave in size,
And that same pond of which I spoke,
A Woman in a scarlet cloak,
And to herself she cries,
'Oh misery ! oh misery !
Oh woe is me ! oh misery !'

VII

"At all times of the day and night
This wretched Woman thither goes ;
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows ;
And there, beside the Thorn, she sits
When the blue daylight's in the skies,
And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,
'Oh misery ! oh misery !
Oh woe is me ! oh misery !'"

VIII

"Now wherefore, thus, by day and night
In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
Thus to the dreary mountain-top
Does this poor Woman go ?
And why sits she beside the Thorn
When the blue daylight's in the sky
Or when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And wherefore does she cry ?—
O wherefore ? wherefore ? tell me why
Does she repeat that doleful cry ?"

IX

"I cannot tell ; I wish I could ;
For the true reason no one knows :
But would you gladly view the spot,
The spot to which she goes ;
The hillock like an infant's grave,
The pond—and Thorn, so old and grey ;
Pass by her door—'tis seldom shut—
And, if you see her in her hut—
Then to the spot away !
I never heard of such as dare
Approach the spot when she is there."

X

"But wherefore to the mountain-top
Can this unhappy Woman go?
Whatever star is in the skies,
Whatever wind may blow?"
"Full twenty years are past and gone
Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
Gave with a maiden's true good-will
Her company to Stephen Hill;
And she was blithe and gay,
While friends and kindred all approved
Of him whom tenderly she loved.

XI

"And they had fixed the wedding day,
The morning that must wed them both;
But Stephen to another Maid
Had sworn another oath;
And, with this other Maid, to church
Unthinking Stephen went—
Poor Martha! on that woeful day
A pang of pitiless dismay
Into her soul was sent;
A fire was kindled in her breast,
Which might not burn itself to rest.

XII

"They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,
And there was often seen.
What could she seek?—or wish to hide?
Her state to any eye was plain;
She was with child, and she was mad;
Yet often was she sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
O guilty Father—would that death
Had saved him from that breach of faith!

XIII

"Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child!
Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild!
Last Christmas-eve we talked of this,
And grey-haired Wilfred of the glen
Held that the unborn infant wrought
About its mother's heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And, when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

XIV

"More know I not, I wish I did,
And it should all be told to you;
For what became of this poor child
No mortal ever knew;
Nay—if a child to her was born
No earthly tongue could ever tell;
And if 'twas born alive or dead,
Far less could this with proof be said;
But some remember well,
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.

XV

"And all that winter, when at night
The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
'Twas worth your while, though in the dark,
The churchyard path to seek:
For many a time and oft were heard
Cries coming from the mountain head:
Some plainly living voices were;
And others, I've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead:
I cannot think, whate'er they say,
They had to do with Martha Ray.

XVI

"But that she goes to this old Thorn,
The Thorn which I described to you,
And there sits in a scarlet cloak
I will be sworn is true.
For one day with my telescope,
To view the ocean wide and bright,
When to this country first I came,
Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
I climbed the mountain's height:—
A storm came on, and I could see
No object higher than my knee.

XVII

"'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain:
No screen, no fence could I discover;
And then the wind! in sooth, it was
A wind full ten times over.
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag,—and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain;
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A Woman seated on the ground.

XVIII

"I did not speak—I saw her face ;
Her face !—it was enough for me ;
I turned about and heard her cry,
'Oh misery ! oh misery !'
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear blue sky will go ;
And, when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shudders, and you hear her cry,
'Oh misery ! oh misery !'"

XIX

"But what's the Thorn ? and what the pond ?
And what the hill of moss to her ?
And what the creeping breeze that comes
The little pond to stir ?"
"I cannot tell ; but some will say
She hanged her baby on the tree ;
Some say she drowned it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond :
But all and each agree,
The little Babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XX

"I've heard, the moss is spotted red
With drops of that poor infant's blood ;
But kill a new-born infant thus,
I do not think she could !
Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby's face,
And that it looks at you ;
Whene'er you look on it, 'tis plain
The baby looks at you again.

XXI

"And some had sworn an oath that she
Should be to public justice brought ;
And for the little infant's bones
With spades they would have sought.
But instantly the hill of moss
Before their eyes began to stir !
And, for full fifty yards around,
The grass—it shook upon the ground !
Yet all do still aver
The little Babe lies buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXII

"I cannot tell how this may be,
But plain it is the Thorn is bound
With heavy tufts of moss that strive
To drag it to the ground ;
And this I know, full many a time,
When she was on the mountain high,
By day, and in the silent night,
When all the stars shone clear and bright,
That I have heard her cry,
'Oh misery ! oh misery !
Oh woe is me ! oh misery !'"

1798.

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL

A TRUE STORY

Written at Alfoxden. The incident from Dr. Darwin's Zoönomia.

Oh ! what's the matter ? what's the matter ?
What is't that ails young Harry Gill ?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still !
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine ;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill ;
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill ;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still !

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he ?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover ;
His voice was like the voice of three.
Old Goody Blake was old and poor ;
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad ;
And any man who passed her door
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling :
And then her three hours' work at night,
Alas ! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.

Remote from sheltered village-green,
On a hill's northern side she dwelt,
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
And hoary dews are slow to melt.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old Dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage;
But she, poor Woman! housed alone.
'Twas well enough when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the *canty* Dame
Would sit, as any linnet, gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh then how her old bones would shake!
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead:
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed;
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

O joy for her! whene'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout;
And scattered many a lusty splinter
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile beforehand, turf or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could any thing be more alluring
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?
And, now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake;
And vowed that she should be detected—
That he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
And to the fields his road would take;
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand:
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble land.
—He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'tis Goody Blake;
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill!

Right glad was he when he beheld her:
Stick after stick did Goody pull:
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about,
The by-way back again to take;
He started forward, with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast,
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, "I've caught you then at last!"—
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall;
And, kneeling on the sticks, she prayed
To God that is the judge of all.

She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
"God! who art never out of hearing,
O may he never more be warm!"
The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray;
Young Harry heard what she had said:
And icy cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
That he was cold and very chill:
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
Alas! that day for Harry Gill!
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he:
Another was on Thursday brought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
And blankets were about him pinned;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter;
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry's flesh it fell away;
And all who see him say, 'tis plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
"Poor Harry Gill is very cold."

A-bed or up, by night or day;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill!

1798.

HER EYES ARE WILD

Written at Alfoxden. The subject was reported to me by a lady of Bristol, who had seen the poor creature.

I

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone:
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the greenwood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

II

"Sweet babe! they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee have no fear of me;
But safe as in a cradle, here,
My lovely baby! thou shalt be:
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe.

III

"A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breast, and pulled at me;
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good;
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood;
Oh joy for me that sight to see!
For he was here, and only he.

IV

"Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It loosens something at my chest;
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers prest,
The breeze I see is in the tree:
It comes to cool my babe and me.

V

"Oh! love me, love me, little boy!
Thou art thy mother's only joy;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go;
The high crag cannot work me harm,
Nor leaping torrents when they howl;
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul;
Then happy lie; for blest am I;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

VI

"Then do not fear, my boy! for thee
Bold as a lion will I be;
And I will always be thy guide,
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I'll build an Indian bower; I know
The leaves that make the softest bed:
And, if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true till I am dead,
My pretty thing! then thou shalt sing
As merry as the birds in spring.

VII

"Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest;
'Tis all thine own!—and, if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove!
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love,
And what if my poor cheek be brown?
'Tis well for me, thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

VIII

"Dread not their taunts, my little Life;
I am thy father's wedded wife;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.

If his sweet boy he could forsake,
With me he never would have stayed :
From him no harm my babe can take ;
But he, poor man ! is wretched made ;
And every day we two will pray
For him that's gone and far away.

IX

"I'll teach my boy the sweetest things :
I'll teach him how the owlet sings.
My little babe ! thy lips are still,
And thou hast almost sucked thy fill.
—Where art thou gone, my own dear child ?
What wicked looks are those I see ?
Alas ! alas ! that look so wild,
It never, never came from me :
If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
Then I must be for ever sad.

X

"Oh ! smile on me, my little lamb !
For I thy own dear mother am :
My love for thee has well been tried :
I've sought thy father far and wide.
I know the poisons of the shade ;
I know the earth-nuts fit for food :
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid :
We'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away!
And there, my babe, we'll live for aye."

1798.

SIMON LEE

THE OLD HUNTSMAN ;

WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED

This old man had been huntsman to the squires of Alfoxden, which, at the time we occupied it, belonged to a minor. The old man's cottage stood upon the common, a little way from the entrance to Alfoxden Park. But it had disappeared. Many other changes had taken place in the adjoining village, which I could not but notice with a regret more natural than well-considered. Improvements but rarely appear such to those who, after long intervals of time, revisit places they have had much pleasure in. It is unnecessary to add, the fact was as mentioned in the poem ; and I have, after an interval of forty-five years, the image of the old man as fresh before my eyes as if I had seen him yesterday. The expression when the hounds were out, "I dearly love their voice," was word for word from his own lips.

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old Man dwells, a little man,—
'Tis said he once was tall.
Full five-and-thirty years he lived
A running huntsman merry ;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glee
When Echo bandied, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.
In those proud days, he little cared
For husbandry or tillage ;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse
The sleepers of the village.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind ;
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reeled, and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices ;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices !

But, oh the heavy change !—bereft
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see !
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His Master's dead,—and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor ;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead ;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick ;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swoln and thick ;
His legs are thin and dry.
One prop he has, and only one,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village Common.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.

This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer?

Oft, working by her Husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two.
And, though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little—all
That they can do between them.

Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle Reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O Reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle Reader! you would find
A tale in every thing.
What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it:
It is no tale; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old Man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock tottered in his hand;
So vain was his endeavour,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever.

"You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool," to him I said;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffered aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I severed,
At which the poor old Man so long
And vainly had endeavoured.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.

1798.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

Actually composed while I was sitting by the side of the brook that runs down from the Comb, in which stands the village of Alford, through the grounds of Alfoxden. It was a chosen resort of mine. The brook fell down a sloping rock so as to make a waterfall considerable for that country, and across the pool below had fallen a tree, an ash if I rightly remember, from which rose perpendicularly, boughs in search of the light intercepted by the deep shade above. The boughs bore leaves of green that for want of sunshine had faded into almost lily-white; and from the underside of this natural sylvan bridge depended long and beautiful tresses of ivy which waved gently in the breeze that might poetically speaking be called the breath of the waterfall. This motion varied of course in proportion to the power of water in the brook. When, with dear friends, I revisited this spot, after an interval of more than forty years, this interesting feature of the scene was gone. To the owner of the place I could not but regret that the beauty of this retired part of the grounds had not tempted him to make it more accessible by a path, not broad or obtrusive, but sufficient for persons who love such scenes to creep along without difficulty.

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

1798.

TO MY SISTER

Composed in front of Alfoxden House. My little boy-messenger on this occasion was the son of Basil Montagu. The larch mentioned in the first stanza was standing when I revisited the place in May 1841, more than forty years after. I was disappointed that it had not improved in appearance as to size, nor had it acquired anything of the majesty of age, which, even though less perhaps than any other tree, the larch sometimes does. A few score yards from this tree, grew, when we inhabited Alfoxden, one of the most remarkable beech-trees ever seen. The ground sloped both towards and from it. It was of immense size, and threw out arms that struck into the soil, like those of the banyan-tree, and rose again from it. Two of the branches thus inserted themselves twice, which gave to each the appearance of a serpent moving along by gathering itself up in folds. One of the large boughs of this tree had been torn off by the wind before we left Alfoxden, but five remained. In 1841 we could barely find the spot where the tree had stood. So remarkable a production of nature could not have been wilfully destroyed.

It is the first mild day of March:
Each minute sweeter than before
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My sister! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you;—and, pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar:
We from to-day, my Friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth:
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey:
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls:
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my Sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

1798.

Observed in the holly-grove at Alfoxden, where these verses were written in the spring of 1799. I had the pleasure of again seeing, with dear friends, this grove in unimpaired beauty forty-one years after.

A WHIRL-BLAST from behind the hill
Rushed o'er the wood with startling sound;
Then—all at once the air was still,
And showers of hailstones pattered round.
Where leafless oaks towered high above,
I sat within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green;
A fairer bower was never seen.
From year to year the spacious floor
With withered leaves is covered o'er,
And all the year the bower is green.
But see! where'er the hailstones drop
The withered leaves all skip and hop;
There's not a breeze—no breath of air—
Yet here, and there, and everywhere
Along the floor, beneath the shade
By those embowering hollies made,
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,

As if with pipes and music rare
Some Robin Good-fellow were there,
And all those leaves, in festive glee,
Were dancing to the minstrelsy.

1798.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

This poem is a favourite among the Quakers, as I have learnt on many occasions. It was composed in front of the house at Alfoxden, in the spring of 1798.

"Why, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

1798.

THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

1798.

THE COMPLAINT

OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN

Written at Alfoxden, where I read Hearne's Journey with deep interest. It was composed for the volume of Lyrical Ballads.

When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel, if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he be unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the desert; unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other tribes of Indians. The females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work Hearne's *Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean.* In the high northern latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the northern lights vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise, as alluded to in the following poem.

I

Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!
In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
The stars, they were among my dreams;
In rustling conflict through the skies,
I heard, I saw the flashes drive,
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive;
Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!

II

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain:
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie!
Alone, I cannot fear to die.

III

Alas! ye might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon I yielded to despair;
Why did ye listen to my prayer?
When ye were gone my limbs were stronger;
And oh, how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
Dear friends, when ye were gone away.

IV

My Child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my Babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran,
A most strange working did I see;
—As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me:
And then he stretched his arms, how wild!
Oh mercy! like a helpless child.

V

My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me;
I feel I must have died with thee.
O wind, that o'er my head art flying
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send;
Too soon, my friends, ye went away;
For I had many things to say.

VI

I'll follow you across the snow;
Ye travel heavily and slow;
In spite of all my weary pain
I'll look upon your tents again.
—My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood:
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I;
Then wherefore should I fear to die?

VII

Young as I am, my course is run,
I shall not see another sun;
I cannot lift my limbs to know
If they have any life or no.
My poor forsaken Child, if I
For once could have thee close to me,
With happy heart I then would die,
And my last thought would happy be;
But thou, dear Babe, art far away,
Nor shall I see another day.

1798.

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK

Produced at the same time and for the same purpose. The incident occurred in the village of Holford, close by Alfoxden.

I

In distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads, alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet:
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad;
And in his arms a Lamb he had.

II

He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide:
And with his coat did then essay
To wipe those briny tears away.
I followed him, and said, "My friend,
What ails you? wherefore weep you so?"
—"Shame on me, Sir! this lusty Lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock;
He is the last of all my flock.

III

"When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, an ewe I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year increased my store.

IV

"Year after year my stock it grew;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As fine a flock as ever grazed!
Upon the Quantock hills they fed;
They throve, and we at home did thrive:
—This lusty Lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

V

"Six Children, Sir! had I to feed;
Hard labour in a time of need!
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the Parish asked relief.
They said, I was a wealthy man;
My sheep upon the uplands fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread.
'Do this: how can we give to you,'
They cried, 'what to the poor is due?'

VI

"I sold a sheep, as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food
For me—it never did me good.
A woeful time it was for me,
To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away—
For me it was a woeful day.

VII

"Another still! and still another!
A little lamb, and then its mother!
It was a vein that never stopped—
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.
'Till thirty were not left alive
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one
And I may say, that many a time
I wished they all were gone—
Reckless of what might come at last
Were but the bitter struggle past.

VIII

"To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies crossed my mind;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me:
No peace, no comfort could I find,
No ease, within doors or without;
And, crazily and wearily
I went my work about;
And oft was moved to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts roam.

IX

"Sir! 'twas a precious flock to me
As dear as my own children be;

For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.
Alas! it was an evil time;
God cursed me in my sore distress;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less;
And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away.

X

"They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see!
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and a ewe;—
And then at last from three to two;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one:
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas! and I have none;—
To-day I fetched it from the rock;
It is the last of all my flock."

1798.

THE IDIOT BOY

The last stanza—"The Cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo, And the sun did shine so cold"—was the foundation of the whole. The words were reported to me by my dear friend, Thomas Poole; but I have since heard the same repeated of other Idiots. Let me add that this long poem was composed in the groves of Alfoxden, almost extempore; not a word, I believe, being corrected, though one stanza was omitted. I mention this in gratitude to those happy moments, for, in truth, I never wrote anything with so much glee.

'TIS eight o'clock,—a clear March night,
The moon is up,—the sky is blue,
The owlet, in the moonlight air,
Shouts from nobody knows where;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo! halloo! a long halloo!

—Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy?
Why are you in this mighty fret?
And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your Idiot Boy?

Scarcely a soul is out of bed;
Good Betty, put him down again;
His lips with joy they burr at you;
But, Betty! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein?

But Betty's bent on her intent;
For her good neighbour, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan
As if her very life would fail.

There's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress;
Old Susan lies a-bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale;
There's none to help poor Susan Gale;
What must be done? what will betide?

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her Pony, that is mild and good;
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing faggots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,—
And, by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has on the well-girt saddle set
(The like was never heard of yet)
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge and through the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand;
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a *hurly-burly* now
He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The Boy, who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
Was, "Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all,—
Come home again, whate'er befall,
My Johnny, do, I pray you do."

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head and with his hand,

And proudly shook the bridle too ;
And then ! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the Pony's side,
On which her Idiot Boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the Pony moved his legs,
Oh ! then for the poor Idiot Boy !
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He's idle all for very joy.

And while the Pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left hand you may see
The green bough motionless and dead :
The Moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship :
Oh ! happy, happy, happy John.

And while the Mother, at the door,
Stands fixed, her face with joy o'erflows,
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim,
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her Idiot Boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart !
He's at the guide-post—he turns right ;
She watches till he's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it ;
Meek as a lamb the Pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale :
Her Messenger's in merry tune ;
The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
As on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree ;
For of this Pony there's a rumour,
That, should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years,
He never will be out of humour.

But then he is a horse that thinks !
And when he thinks, his pace is slack ;
Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet, for his life, he cannot tell
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What speedy help her Boy will bring,
With many a most diverting thing,
Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory.

And Betty, still at Susan's side,
By this time is not quite so flurried :
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman ! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well ;
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears,
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans ;
"As sure as there's a moon in heaven,"
Cries Betty, "he'll be back again ;
They'll both be here—'tis almost ten—
Both will be here before eleven."

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans ;
The clock gives warning for eleven ;
'Tis on the stroke—"He must be near,"
Quoth Betty, "and will soon be here,
As sure as there's a moon in heaven."

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Johnny is not yet in sight :
—The Moon's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease ;
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast :

"A little idle sauntering Thing!"
With other names, an endless string;
But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
"How can it be he is so late?
The Doctor, he has made him wait;
Susan! they'll both be here anon."

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
And Betty's in a sad *quandary;*
And then there's nobody to say
If she must go, or she must stay!
—She's in a sad *quandary.*

The clock is on the stroke of one;
But neither Doctor nor his Guide
Appears along the moonlight road;
There's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty's still at Susan's side.

And Susan now begins to fear
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drowned;
Or lost, perhaps, and never found;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With, "God forbid it should be true!"
At the first word that Susan said
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
"Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.

"I must be gone, I must away:
Consider, Johnny's but half-wise;
Susan, we must take care of him,
If he is hurt in life or limb"—
"Oh God forbid!" poor Susan cries.

"What can I do?" says Betty, going,
"What can I do to ease your pain?
Good Susan tell me, and I'll stay;
I fear you're in a dreadful way,
But I shall soon be back again."

"Nay, Betty, go! good Betty, go!
There's nothing that can ease my pain."
Then off she hies; but with a prayer
That God poor Susan's life would spare,
Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale;
And how she ran, and how she walked,
And all that to herself she talked,
Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green;
'Twas Johnny, Johnny, every where.

And while she crossed the bridge, there came
A thought with which her heart is sore—
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon within the brook,
And never will be heard of more.

Now is she high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There's neither Johnny nor his Horse
Among the fern or in the gorse;
There's neither Doctor nor his Guide.

"O saints! what is become of him?
Perhaps he's climbed into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or, sadly he has been misled,
And joined the wandering gipsy-folk.

"Or him that wicked Pony's carried
To the dark cave, the goblin's hall;
Or in the castle he's pursuing
Among the ghosts his own undoing;
Or playing with the waterfall."

At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away;
"If Susan had not been so ill,
Alas! I should have had him still,
My Johnny, till my dying day."

Poor Betty, in this sad distemper,
The Doctor's self could hardly spare:
Unworthy things she talked, and wild;
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The Pony had his share.

But now she's fairly in the town,
And to the Doctor's door she hies;
'Tis silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she's at the Doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap;
The Doctor at the casement shows
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze!
And one hand rubs his old night-cap.

"O Doctor! Doctor! where's my Johnny?"
"I'm here, what is't you want with me?"

"O Sir! you know I'm Betty Foy,
And I have lost my poor dear Boy,
You know him—him you often see;

"He's not so wise as some folks be:"
"The devil take his wisdom!" said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
"What, Woman! should I know of him?"
And, grumbling, he went back to bed!

"O woe is me! O woe is me!
Here will I die; here will I die;
I thought to find my lost one here,
But he is neither far nor near,
Oh! what a wretched Mother I!"

She stops, she stands, she looks about;
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty! it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again;
—The clock strikes three—a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail;
This piteous news so much it shocked her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road:
"O cruel! I'm almost threescore;
Such night as this was ne'er before,
There's not a single soul abroad."

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now, if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers! yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin,
A green-grown pond she just has past,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
Such tears she never shed before;
"Oh dear, dear Pony! my sweet joy!
Oh carry back my Idiot Boy!
And we will ne'er o'erload thee more."

A thought is come into her head:
The Pony he is mild and good,
And we have always used him well;
Perhaps he's gone along the dell,
And carried Johnny to the wood.

Then up she springs as if on wings;
She thinks no more of deadly sin;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be
To drown herself therein.

O Reader! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his Horse are doing
What they've been doing all this time,
Oh could I put it into rhyme,
A most delightful tale pursuing!

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
He with his Pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
All silent as a horseman-ghost,
He travels slowly down the vale.

And now, perhaps, is hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he;
Yon valley, now so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be!

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He's galloping away, away,
And so will gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil!

I to the Muses have been bound
These fourteen years, by strong indentures
O gentle Muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befell;
He surely met with strange adventures.

O gentle Muses! is this kind?
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me
Ye Muses! whom I love so well?

Who's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,

Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse?

Unto his horse—there feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read:
—'Tis Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

And that's the very Pony, too!
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring waterfall she hears,
And cannot find her Idiot Boy.

Your Pony's worth his weight in gold:
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She's coming from among the trees,
And now all full in view she sees
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And Betty sees the Pony too:
Why stand you thus, good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 'tis no ghost,
'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your Idiot Boy.

She looks again—her arms are up—
She screams—she cannot move for joy;
She darts, as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the Horse,
And fast she holds her Idiot Boy.

And Johnny burrs, and laughs aloud;
Whether in cunning or in joy
I cannot tell; but while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

And now she's at the Pony's tail,
And now is at the Pony's head,—
On that side now, and now on this;
And, almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy;
She's happy here, is happy there,
She is uneasy every where;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the Pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
The little Pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

"Oh! Johnny, never mind the Doctor;
You've done your best, and that is all:"
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turned the Pony's head
From the loud waterfall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The Pony, Betty, and her Boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale;
And who is she, betimes abroad,
That hobbles up the steep rough road?
Who is it, but old Susan Gale?

Long time lay Susan lost in thought;
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her Messenger and Nurse;
And, as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body—it grew better.

She turned, she tossed herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And, while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

"Alas! what is become of them?
These fears can never be endured;
I'll to the wood."—The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she goes up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come;
She spies her Friends, she shouts a greeting;
Oh me! it is a merry meeting
As ever was in Christendom.

The owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four travellers homeward wend;
The owls have hooted all night long,
And with the owls began my song,
And with the owls must end.

For while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, "Tell us, Johnny, do,
Where all this long night you have been,
What you have heard, what you have seen:
And, Johnny, mind you tell us true."

Now Johnny all night long had heard
The owls in tuneful concert strive ;
No doubt too he the moon had seen ;
For in the moonlight he had been
From eight o'clock till five.

And thus, to Betty's question, he
Made answer, like a traveller bold,
(His very words I give to you,)
"The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
And the sun did shine so cold!"
—Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
And that was all his travel's story.
1798.

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR. JULY 13, 1798

No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my Sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol. It was published almost immediately after in the little volume of which so much has been said in these Notes.—(The Lyrical Ballads, as first published at Bristol by Cottle.)

FIVE years have past ; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters ! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.[1]—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild : these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door ; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees !
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye :
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration :—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh ! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight ; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—

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[1] The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompence. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,[1]
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb

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[1] This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's, the exact expression of which I do not recollect.

Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

1798.

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR

Observed, and with great benefit to my own heart, when I was a child: written at Racedown and Alfoxden in my twenty-third year. The political economists were about that time beginning their war upon mendicity in all its forms, and by implication, if not directly, on alms-giving also. This heartless process has been carried as far as it can go by the AMENDED poor-law bill, though the inhumanity that prevails in this measure is somewhat disguised by the profession that one of its objects is to throw the poor upon the voluntary donations of their neighbours; that is, if rightly interpreted, to force them into a condition between relief in the Union poor-house, and alms robbed of their Christian grace and spirit, as being *forced* rather from the benevolent than given by them; while the avaricious and selfish, and all in fact but the humane and charitable, are at liberty to keep all they possess from their distressed brethren.

The class of Beggars, to which the Old Man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and, mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days, on which, at different houses, they regularly received alms, sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.

I SAW an aged Beggar in my walk;
And he was seated, by the highway side,
On a low structure of rude masonry
Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
May thence remount at ease. The aged Man
Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone
That overlays the pile; and, from a bag
All white with flour, the dole of village dames,
He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one;
And scanned them with a fixed and serious look
Of idle computation. In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
He sat, and ate his food in solitude:
And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
Fell on the ground; and the small mountain birds,
Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal,
Approached within the length of half his staff.
Him from my childhood have I known; and then
He was so old, he seems not older now;
He travels on, a solitary Man,
So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering Horseman throws not with a slack
And careless hand his alms upon the ground,
But stops,—that he may safely lodge the coin

Within the old Man's hat; nor quits him so,
But still, when he has given his horse the rein,
Watches the aged Beggar with a look
Sidelong, and half-reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
The post-boy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake
The aged Beggar in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind; and if, thus warned,
The old man does not change his course, the boy
Turns with less noisy wheels to the road-side,
And passes gently by, without a curse
Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.
He travels on, a solitary Man;
His age has no companion. On the ground
His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along
They move along the ground; and, evermore,
Instead of common and habitual sight
Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
And the blue sky, one little span of earth
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
He plies his weary journey; seeing still,
And seldom knowing that he sees, some straw,
Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in one track,
The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have left
Impressed on the white road,—in the same line,
At distance still the same. Poor Traveller!
His staff trails with him; scarcely do his feet
Disturb the summer dust; he is so still
In look and motion, that the cottage curs,
Ere he has passed the door, will turn away,
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
And urchins newly breeched—all pass him by:
Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves behind.
But deem not this Man useless.—Statesmen! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate
Your talents, power, or wisdom, deem him not
A burthen of the earth! 'Tis Nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,
Or forms created the most vile and brute,
The dullest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,
A life and soul, to every mode of being
Inseparably linked. Then be assured
That least of all can aught—that ever owned
The heaven-regarding eye and front sublime
Which man is born to—sink, howe'er depressed,
So low as to be scorned without a sin;
Without offence to God cast out of view;
Like the dry remnant of a garden-flower
Whose seeds are shed, or as an implement
Worn out and worthless. While from door to door,
This old Man creeps, the villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity,
Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
And that half-wisdom half-experience gives,
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts,
Hamlets and thinly-scattered villages,
Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love; and habit does the work
Of reason; yet prepares that after-joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,
Doth find herself insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness.

Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle: even such minds
In childhood, from this solitary Being,
Or from like wanderer, haply have received
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solicitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
Who sits at his own door,—and, like the pear
That overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred;—all behold in him
A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and, perchance,
Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he, at least,
And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.
Yet further.——Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
Are strict observers; and not negligent
In acts of love to those with whom they dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace!
—But of the poor man ask, the abject poor;
Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul?
No—man is dear to man; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been,
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-out
Of some small blessings; have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
—Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each week
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself
By her own wants, she from her store of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.
Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And while in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has borne him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,
Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of Heaven
Has hung around him: and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unlettered villagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
—Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the valleys; let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows;
And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his grey locks against his withered face.

Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never House, misnamed of Industry,
Make him a captive!—for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age!
Let him be free of mountain solitudes;
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
Few are his pleasures: if his eyes have now
Been doomed so long to settle upon earth
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun,
Rising or setting, let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.
And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or on a grassy bank
Of highway side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gathered meal; and, finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die!

1798.

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY

The little hedgerow birds,
That peck along the roads, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression: every limb,
His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought.—He is insensibly subdued
To settled quiet: he is one by whom
All effort seems forgotten; one to whom
Long patience hath such mild composure given,
That patience now doth seem a thing of which
He hath no need. He is by nature led
To peace so perfect that the young behold
With envy, what the Old Man hardly feels.

1798.

PETER BELL

A TALE

What's in a *Name?*

. . . . .

Brutus will start a Spirit as soon as Cæsar!

Written at Alfoxden. Founded upon an anecdote, which I read in a newspaper, of an ass being found hanging his head over a canal in a wretched posture. Upon examination a dead body was found in the water and proved to be the body of its master. The countenance, gait, and figure of Peter, were taken from a wild rover with whom I walked from Builth, on the river Wye, downwards nearly as far as the town of Hay. He told me strange stories. It has always been a pleasure to me through life to catch at every opportunity that has occurred in my rambles of becoming acquainted with this class of people. The number of Peter's wives was taken from the trespasses in this way of a lawless creature who lived in the county of Durham, and used to be attended by many women, sometimes not less than half a dozen, as disorderly as himself. Benoni, or the child of sorrow, I knew when I was a school-boy. His mother had been deserted by a gentleman in the neighbourhood, she herself being a gentlewoman by birth. The circumstances of her story were told me by my dear old Dame, Anne Tyson, who was her confidante. The Lady died broken-hearted.—In the woods of Alfoxden I used to take great delight in noticing the habits, tricks, and physiognomy of asses; and I have no doubt that I was thus put upon writing the poem out of liking for the creature that is so often dreadfully abused.—The crescent-moon, which makes such a figure in the prologue, assumed this character one evening while I was watching its beauty in front of Alfoxden House. I intended this poem for the volume before spoken of, but it was not published for more than twenty years afterwards.—The worship of the Methodists or Ranters is often heard during the stillness of the summer evening in the country with affecting accompaniments of rural beauty. In both the psalmody and the voice of the preacher there is, not unfrequently, much solemnity likely to impress the feelings of the rudest characters under favourable circumstances.

TO

ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ., P.L., ETC. ETC.

My dear Friend,

The Tale of Peter Bell, which I now introduce to your notice, and to that of the Public, has, in its Manuscript state, nearly survived its *minority*:—for it first saw the light in the summer of 1798. During this long interval, pains have been taken at different times to make the production less unworthy of a favourable reception; or, rather, to fit it for filling *permanently* a station, however humble, in the Literature of our Country. This has, indeed, been the aim of all my endeavours in Poetry, which, you know, have been sufficiently laborious to prove that I deem the Art not lightly to be approached; and that the attainment of excellence in it may laudably be made the principal object of intellectual pursuit by any man, who, with reasonable consideration of circumstances, has faith in his own impulses.

The Poem of Peter Bell, as the Prologue will show, was composed under a belief that the Imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency, but that, though such agency be excluded, the faculty may be called forth as imperiously and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents, within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life. Since that Prologue was written, *you* have exhibited most splendid effects of judicious daring, in the opposite and usual course. Let this acknowledgment make my peace with the lovers of the supernatural; and I am persuaded it will be admitted, that to you, as a Master in that province of the Art, the following Tale, whether from contrast or congruity, is not an unappropriate offering. Accept it, then, as a public testimony of affectionate admiration from one with whose name yours has been often coupled (to use your own words) for evil and for good; and believe me to be, with earnest wishes that life and health may be granted you to complete the many important works in which you are engaged, and with high respect,

Most faithfully yours,
William Wordsworth.

Rydal Mount, April 7, 1819.

Prologue

There's something in a flying horse,
There's something in a huge balloon;
But through the clouds I'll never float
Until I have a little Boat,
Shaped like the crescent-moon.

And now I *have* a little Boat,
In shape a very crescent-moon
Fast through the clouds my boat can sail;
But if perchance your faith should fail,
Look up—and you shall see me soon!

The woods, my Friends, are round you roaring,
Rocking and roaring like a sea;
The noise of danger's in your ears,
And ye have all a thousand fears
Both for my little Boat and me!

Meanwhile untroubled I admire
The pointed horns of my canoe;
And, did not pity touch my breast,
To see how ye are all distrest,
Till my ribs ached, I'd laugh at you!

Away we go, my Boat and I—
Frail man ne'er sate in such another;
Whether among the winds we strive,
Or deep into the clouds we dive,
Each is contented with the other.

Away we go—and what care we
For treasons, tumults, and for wars?
We are as calm in our delight
As is the crescent-moon so bright
Among the scattered stars.

Up goes my Boat among the stars
Through many a breathless field of light,
Through many a long blue field of ether,
Leaving ten thousand stars beneath her:
Up goes my little Boat so bright!

The Crab, the Scorpion, and the Bull—
We pry among them all; have shot
High o'er the red-haired race of Mars,
Covered from top to toe with scars;
Such company I like it not!

The towns in Saturn are decayed,
And melancholy Spectres throng them;—
The Pleïads, that appear to kiss
Each other in the vast abyss,
With joy I sail among them.

Swift Mercury resounds with mirth,
Great Jove is full of stately bowers;
But these, and all that they contain,
What are they to that tiny grain,
That little Earth of ours?

Then back to Earth, the dear green Earth:—
Whole ages if I here should roam,
The world for my remarks and me
Would not a whit the better be;
I've left my heart at home.

See! there she is, the matchless Earth!
There spreads the famed Pacific Ocean!
Old Andes thrusts yon craggy spear
Through the grey clouds; the Alps are here,
Like waters in commotion!

Yon tawny slip is Libya's sands;
That silver thread the river Dnieper!
And look, where clothed in brightest green
Is a sweet Isle, of isles the Queen;
Ye fairies, from all evil keep her!

And see the town where I was born!
Around those happy fields we span
In boyish gambols;—I was lost
Where I have been, but on this coast
I feel I am a man.

Never did fifty things at once
Appear so lovely, never, never;—
How tunefully the forests ring!
To hear the earth's soft murmuring
Thus could I hang for ever!

"Shame on you!" cried my little Boat,
"Was ever such a homesick Loon.
Within a living Boat to sit,
And make no better use of it;
A Boat twin-sister of the crescent-moon!

"Ne'er in the breast of full-grown Poet
Fluttered so faint a heart before;—
Was it the music of the spheres
That overpowered your mortal ears?
—Such din shall trouble them no more.

"These nether precincts do not lack
Charms of their own;—then come with me;
I want a comrade, and for you
There's nothing that I would not do;
Nought is there that you shall not see.

"Haste! and above Siberian snows
We'll sport amid the boreal morning;
Will mingle with her lustres gliding
Among the stars, the stars now hiding,
And now the stars adorning.

"I know the secrets of a land
Where human foot did never stray;
Fair is that land as evening skies,
And cool, though in the depth it lies
Of burning Africa.

"Or we'll into the realm of Faery,
Among the lovely shades of things;
The shadowy forms of mountains bare,
And streams, and bowers, and ladies fair,
The shades of palaces and kings!

"Or, if you thirst with hardy zeal
Less quiet regions to explore,
Prompt voyage shall to you reveal
How earth and heaven are taught to feel
The might of magic lore!"

"My little vagrant Form of light,
My gay and beautiful Canoe,
Well have you played your friendly part;
As kindly take what from my heart
Experience forces—then adieu!

"Temptation lurks among your words;
But, while these pleasures you're pursuing
Without impediment or let,
No wonder if you quite forget
What on the earth is doing.

"There was a time when all mankind
Did listen with a faith sincere
To tuneful tongues in mystery versed;
Then Poets fearlessly rehearsed
The wonders of a wild career.

"Go—(but the world's a sleepy world,
And 'tis, I fear, an age too late)
Take with you some ambitious Youth!
For, restless Wanderer! I, in truth,
Am all unfit to be your mate.

"Long have I loved what I behold,
The night that calms, the day that cheers;
The common growth of mother-earth
Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,
Her humblest mirth and tears.

"The dragon's wing, the magic ring,
I shall not covet for my dower,
If I along that lowly way
With sympathetic heart may stray,
And with a soul of power.

"These given, what more need I desire
To stir, to soothe, or elevate?
What nobler marvels than the mind
May in life's daily prospect find,
May find or there create?

"A potent wand doth Sorrow wield;
What spell so strong as guilty Fear!
Repentance is a tender Sprite;
If aught on earth have heavenly might,
'Tis lodged within her silent tear.

"But grant my wishes,—let us now
Descend from this ethereal height;
Then take thy way, adventurous Skiff,
More daring far than Hippogriff,
And be thy own delight!

"To the stone-table in my garden,
Loved haunt of many a summer hour,
The Squire is come: his daughter Bess
Beside him in the cool recess
Sits blooming like a flower.

"With these are many more convened;
They know not I have been so far;—
I see them there, in number nine,
Beneath the spreading Weymouth-pine!
I see them—there they are!

"There sits the Vicar and his Dame;
And there my good friend, Stephen Otter;
And, ere the light of evening fail,
To them I must relate the Tale
Of Peter Bell the Potter."

Off flew the Boat—away she flees,
Spurning her freight with indignation!
And I, as well as I was able,
On two poor legs, toward my stone-table
Limped on with sore vexation.

"O, here he is!" cried little Bess—
She saw me at the garden-door;
"We've waited anxiously and long,"
They cried, and all around me throng,
Full nine of them or more!

"Reproach me not—your fears be still—
Be thankful we again have met;—
Resume, my Friends! within the shade
Your seats, and quickly shall be paid
The well-remembered debt."

I spake with faltering voice, like one
Not wholly rescued from the pale
Of a wild dream, or worse illusion;
But, straight, to cover my confusion,
Began the promised Tale.

PART FIRST

ALL by the moonlight river side
Groaned the poor Beast—alas! in vain;
The staff was raised to loftier height,
And the blows fell with heavier weight
As Peter struck—and struck again.

"Hold!" cried the Squire, "against the rules
Of common sense you're surely sinning;
This leap is for us all too bold;
Who Peter was, let that be told,
And start from the beginning."

——"A Potter,[1] Sir, he was by trade,"
Said I, becoming quite collected;
"And wheresoever he appeared,
Full twenty times was Peter feared
For once that Peter was respected.

"He, two-and-thirty years or more,
Had been a wild and woodland rover;
Had heard the Atlantic surges roar
On farthest Cornwall's rocky shore,
And trod the cliffs of Dover.

"And he had seen Caernarvon's towers,
And well he knew the spire of Sarum;
And he had been where Lincoln bell
Flings o'er the fen that ponderous knell—
A far-renowned alarum!

"At Doncaster, at York, and Leeds,
And merry Carlisle had he been;
And all along the Lowlands fair,
All through the bonny shire of Ayr
And far as Aberdeen.

"And he had been at Inverness;
And Peter, by the mountain-rills,
Had danced his round with Highland lasses;
And he had lain beside his asses
On lofty Cheviot Hills:

"And he had trudged through Yorkshire dales,
Among the rocks and winding *scars*;
Where deep and low the hamlets lie
Beneath their little patch of sky
And little lot of stars:

[1] In the dialect of the North, a hawker of earthenware is thus designated.

"And all along the indented coast,
Bespattered with the salt-sea foam;
Where'er a knot of houses lay
On headland, or in hollow bay;—
Sure never man like him did roam!

"As well might Peter, in the Fleet,
Have been fast bound, a begging debtor;—
He travelled here, he travelled there;—
But not the value of a hair
Was heart or head the better.

"He roved among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell;
They were his dwellings night and day,—
But nature ne'er could find the way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

"In vain, through every changeful year,
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

"Small change it made on Peter's heart
To see his gentle panniered train
With more than vernal pleasure feeding,
Where'er the tender grass was leading
Its earliest green along the lane.

"In vain, through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

"At noon, when, by the forest's edge
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky!

"On a fair prospect some have looked
And felt, as I have heard them say,
As if the moving time had been
A thing as steadfast as the scene
On which they gazed themselves away.

"Within the breast of Peter Bell
These silent raptures found no place;
He was a Carl as wild and rude
As ever hue-and-cry pursued,
As ever ran a felon's race.

"Of all that lead a lawless life,
Of all that love their lawless lives,
In city or in village small,
He was the wildest far of all;—
He had a dozen wedded wives.

"Nay, start not!—wedded wives—and twelve!
But how one wife could e'er come near him,
In simple truth I cannot tell;
For, be it said of Peter Bell,
To see him was to fear him.

"Though Nature could not touch his heart
By lovely forms, and silent weather,
And tender sounds, yet you might see
At once, that Peter Bell and she
Had often been together.

"A savage wildness round him hung
As of a dweller out of doors;
In his whole figure and his mien
A savage character was seen
Of mountains and of dreary moors.

"To all the unshaped half-human thoughts
Which solitary Nature feeds
'Mid summer storms or winter's ice,
Had Peter joined whatever vice
The cruel city breeds.

"His face was keen as is the wind
That cuts along the hawthorn-fence;—
Of courage you saw little there,
But, in its stead, a medley air
Of cunning and of impudence.

"He had a dark and sidelong walk,
And long and slouching was his gait;
Beneath his looks so bare and bold,
You might perceive, his spirit cold
Was playing with some inward bait.

"His forehead wrinkled was and furred;
A work, one half of which was done
By thinking of his '*whens*' and '*hows*;'
And half, by knitting of his brows
Beneath the glaring sun.

"There was a hardness in his cheek,
There was a hardness in his eye,
As if the man had fixed his face,
In many a solitary place,
Against the wind and open sky!"

One night, (and now my little Bess!
We've reached at last the promised Tale:)
One beautiful November night,
When the full moon was shining bright
Upon the rapid river Swale,

Along the river's winding banks
Peter was travelling all alone;—
Whether to buy or sell, or led
By pleasure running in his head,
To me was never known.

He trudged along through copse and brake,
He trudged along o'er hill and dale;
Nor for the moon cared he a tittle,
And for the stars he cared as little,
And for the murmuring river Swale.

But, chancing to espy a path
That promised to cut short the way
As many a wiser man hath done,
He left a trusty guide for one
That might his steps betray.

To a thick wood he soon is brought
Where cheerily his course he weaves,
And whistling loud may yet be heard,
Though often buried, like a bird
Darkling, among the boughs and leaves.

But quickly Peter's mood is changed,
And on he drives with cheeks that burn
In downright fury and in wrath;—
There's little sign the treacherous path
Will to the road return!

The path grows dim, and dimmer still;
Now up, now down, the Rover wends,
With all the sail that he can carry,
Till brought to a deserted quarry—
And there the pathway ends.

He paused—for shadows of strange shape,
Massy and black, before him lay;
But through the dark, and through the cold,
And through the yawning fissures old,
Did Peter boldly press his way

Right through the quarry;—and behold
A scene of soft and lovely hue!
Where blue and grey, and tender green,
Together make as sweet a scene
As ever human eye did view.

Beneath the clear blue sky he saw
A little field of meadow ground;
But field or meadow name it not;
Call it of earth a small green plot,
With rocks encompassed round.

The Swale flowed under the grey rocks,
But he flowed quiet and unseen;—
You need a strong and stormy gale
To bring the noises of the Swale
To that green spot, so calm and green!

And is there no one dwelling here,
No hermit with his beads and glass?
And does no little cottage look
Upon this soft and fertile nook?
Does no one live near this green grass?

Across the deep and quiet spot
Is Peter driving through the grass—
And now has reached the skirting trees;
When, turning round his head, he sees
A solitary Ass.

"A Prize!" cries Peter—but he first
Must spy about him far and near:
There's not a single house in sight,
No woodman's hut, no cottage light—
Peter, you need not fear!

There's nothing to be seen but woods,
And rocks that spread a hoary gleam,
And this one Beast, that from the bed
Of the green meadow hangs his head
Over the silent stream.

His head is with a halter bound;
The halter seizing, Peter leapt
Upon the Creature's back, and plied
With ready heels his shaggy side;
But still the Ass his station kept.

Then Peter gave a sudden jerk,
A jerk that from a dungeon-floor
Would have pulled up an iron ring;
But still the heavy-headed Thing
Stood just as he had stood before!

Quoth Peter, leaping from his seat,
"There is some plot against me laid;"
Once more the little meadow-ground
And all the hoary cliffs around
He cautiously surveyed.

All, all is silent—rocks and woods,
All still and silent—far and near!
Only the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turns round his long left ear.

Thought Peter, What can mean all this?
Some ugly witchcraft must be here!
—Once more the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turned round his long left ear.

Suspicion ripened into dread;
Yet with deliberate action slow,
His staff high-raising, in the pride
Of skill, upon the sounding hide,
He dealt a sturdy blow.

The poor Ass staggered with the shock;
And then, as if to take his ease,
In quiet uncomplaining mood,
Upon the spot where he had stood,
Dropped gently down upon his knees:

As gently on his side he fell;
And by the river's brink did lie;
And, while he lay like one that mourned,
The patient Beast on Peter turned
His shining hazel eye.

'Twas but one mild, reproachful look,
A look more tender than severe;
And straight in sorrow, not in dread,
He turned the eye-ball in his head
Towards the smooth river deep and clear.

Upon the Beast the sapling rings;
His lank sides heaved, his limbs they stirred;
He gave a groan, and then another,
Of that which went before the brother,
And then he gave a third.

All by the moonlight river side
He gave three miserable groans;
And not till now hath Peter seen
How gaunt the Creature is,—how lean
And sharp his staring bones!

With legs stretched out and stiff he lay:—
No word of kind commiseration
Fell at the sight from Peter's tongue;
With hard contempt his heart was wrung,
With hatred and vexation.

The meagre beast lay still as death;
And Peter's lips with fury quiver;
Quoth he, "You little mulish dog,
I'll fling your carcase like a log
Head-foremost down the river!"

An impious oath confirmed the threat—
Whereat from the earth on which he lay
To all the echoes, south and north,
And east and west, the Ass sent forth
A long and clamorous bray!

This outcry, on the heart of Peter,
Seems like a note of joy to strike,—
Joy at the heart of Peter knocks;
But in the echo of the rocks
Was something Peter did not like.

Whether to cheer his coward breast,
Or that he could not break the chain,
In this serene and solemn hour,
Twined round him by demoniac power,
To the blind work he turned again.

Among the rocks and winding crags;
Among the mountains far away;
Once more the ass did lengthen out
More ruefully a deep-drawn shout,
The hard dry see-saw of his horrible bray!

What is there now in Peter's heart!
Or whence the might of this strange sound?
The moon uneasy looked and dimmer,
The broad blue heavens appeared to glimmer,
And the rocks staggered all around—

From Peter's hand the sapling dropped!
Threat has he none to execute;
"If any one should come and see
That I am here, they'll think," quoth he,
"I'm helping this poor dying brute."

He scans the Ass from limb to limb,
And ventures now to uplift his eyes;
More steady looks the moon, and clear,
More like themselves the rocks appear
And touch more quiet skies.

His scorn returns—his hate revives;
He stoops the Ass's neck to seize
With malice—that again takes flight;
For in the pool a startling sight
Meets him, among the inverted trees.

Is it the moon's distorted face?
The ghost-like image of a cloud?
Is it a gallows there portrayed?
Is Peter of himself afraid?
Is it a coffin,—or a shroud?

A grisly idol hewn in stone?
Or imp from witch's lap let fall?
Perhaps a ring of shining fairies?
Such as pursue their feared vagaries
In sylvan bower, or haunted hall?

Is it a fiend that to a stake
Of fire his desperate self is tethering?
Or stubborn spirit doomed to yell
In solitary ward or cell,
Ten thousand miles from all his brethren?

Never did pulse so quickly throb,
And never heart so loudly panted;
He looks, he cannot choose but look;
Like some one reading in a book—
A book that is enchanted.

Ah, well-a-day for Peter Bell!
He will be turned to iron soon,
Meet Statue for the court of Fear!
His hat is up—and every hair
Bristles, and whitens in the moon!

He looks, he ponders, looks again;
He sees a motion—hears a groan;
His eyes will burst—his heart will break—
He gives a loud and frightful shriek,
And back he falls, as if his life were flown!

PART SECOND

WE left our Hero in a trance,
Beneath the alders, near the river;
The Ass is by the river-side,
And, where the feeble breezes glide,
Upon the stream the moonbeams quiver.

A happy respite! but at length
He feels the glimmering of the moon;
Wakes with glazed eye, and feebly sighing—
To sink, perhaps, where he is lying,
Into a second swoon!

He lifts his head, he sees his staff;
He touches—'tis to him a treasure!
Faint recollection seems to tell
That he is yet where mortals dwell—
A thought received with languid pleasure!

His head upon his elbow propped,
Becoming less and less perplexed,
Sky-ward he looks—to rock and wood—
And then—upon the glassy flood
His wandering eye is fixed.

Thought he, that is the face of one
In his last sleep securely bound!
So toward the stream his head he bent,
And downward thrust his staff, intent
The river's depth to sound.

Now—like a tempest-shattered bark,
That overwhelmed and prostrate lies,
And in a moment to the verge
Is lifted of a foaming surge—
Full suddenly the Ass doth rise!

His staring bones all shake with joy,
And close by Peter's side he stands:
While Peter o'er the river bends,
The little Ass his neck extends,
And fondly licks his hands.

Such life is in the Ass's eyes,
Such life is in his limbs and ears;
That Peter Bell, if he had been
The veriest coward ever seen,
Must now have thrown aside his fears.

The Ass looks on—and to his work
Is Peter quietly resigned;
He touches here—he touches there—
And now among the dead man's hair
His sapling Peter has entwined.

He pulls—and looks—and pulls again;
And he whom the poor Ass had lost,
The man who had been four days dead,
Head-foremost from the river's bed
Uprises like a ghost!

And Peter draws him to dry land;
And through the brain of Peter pass
Some poignant twitches, fast and faster;
"No doubt," quoth he, "he is the Master
Of this poor miserable Ass!"

The meagre Shadow that looks on—
What would he now? what is he doing?
His sudden fit of joy is flown,—
He on his knees hath laid him down,
As if he were his grief renewing;

But no—that Peter on his back
Must mount, he shows well as he can:
Thought Peter then, come weal or woe,
I'll do what he would have me do,
In pity to this poor drowned man.

With that resolve he boldly mounts
Upon the pleased and thankful Ass;
And then, without a moment's stay,
That earnest Creature turned away
Leaving the body on the grass.

Intent upon his faithful watch,
The Beast four days and nights had past;
A sweeter meadow ne'er was seen,
And there the Ass four days had been,
Nor ever once did break his fast:

Yet firm his step, and stout his heart;
The mead is crossed—the quarry's mouth
Is reached; but there the trusty guide
Into a thicket turns aside,
And deftly ambles towards the south.

When hark a burst of doleful sound!
And Peter honestly might say,
The like came never to his ears,
Though he has been, full thirty years,
A rover—night and day!

'Tis not a plover of the moors,
'Tis not a bittern of the fen;
Nor can it be a barking fox,
Nor night-bird chambered in the rocks,
Nor wild-cat in a woody glen!

The Ass is startled—and stops short
Right in the middle of the thicket;
And Peter, wont to whistle loud
Whether alone or in a crowd,
Is silent as a silent cricket.

What ails you now, my little Bess?
Well may you tremble and look grave!
This cry—that rings along the wood,
This cry—that floats adown the flood,
Comes from the entrance of a cave:

I see a blooming Wood-boy there,
And if I had the power to say
How sorrowful the wanderer is,
Your heart would be as sad as his
Till you had kissed his tears away!

Grasping a hawthorn branch in hand,
All bright with berries ripe and red,
Into the cavern's mouth he peeps;
Thence back into the moonlight creeps;
Whom seeks he—whom?—the silent dead

His father!—Him doth he require—
Him hath he sought with fruitless pains,
Among the rocks, behind the trees;
Now creeping on his hands and knees,
Now running o'er the open plains.

And hither is he come at last,
When he through such a day has gone,
By this dark cave to be distrest
Like a poor bird—her plundered nest
Hovering around with dolorous moan!

Of that intense and piercing cry
The listening Ass conjectures well;
Wild as it is, he there can read
Some intermingled notes that plead
With touches irresistible.

But Peter—when he saw the Ass
Not only stop but turn, and change
The cherished tenor of his pace
That lamentable cry to chase—
It wrought in him conviction strange;

A faith that, for the dead man's sake
And this poor slave who loved him well,
Vengeance upon his head will fall,
Some visitation worse than all
Which ever till this night befell.

Meanwhile the Ass to reach his home,
Is striving stoutly as he may;
But, while he climbs the woody hill,
The cry grows weak—and weaker still;
And now at last it dies away.

So with his freight the Creature turns
Into a gloomy grove of beech,
Along the shade with footsteps true
Descending slowly, till the two
The open moonlight reach.

And there, along the narrow dell,
A fair smooth pathway you discern,
A length of green and open road—
As if it from a fountain flowed—
Winding away between the fern.

The rocks that tower on either side
Build up a wild fantastic scene;
Temples like those among the Hindoos,
And mosques, and spires, and abbey windows,
And castles all with ivy green!

And, while the Ass pursues his way,
Along this solitary dell,
As pensively his steps advance,
The mosques and spires change countenance
And look at Peter Bell!

That unintelligible cry
Hath left him high in preparation,—
Convinced that he, or soon or late,
This very night will meet his fate—
And so he sits in expectation!

The strenuous Animal hath clomb
With the green path; and now he wends
Where, shining like the smoothest sea,
In undisturbed immensity
A level plain extends.

But whence this faintly-rustling sound
By which the journeying pair are chased?
—A withered leaf is close behind,
Light plaything for the sportive wind
Upon that solitary waste.

When Peter spied the moving thing,
It only doubled his distress;
"Where there is not a bush or tree,
The very leaves they follow me—
So huge hath been my wickedness!"

To a close lane they now are come,
Where, as before, the enduring Ass
Moves on without a moment's stop,
Nor once turns round his head to crop
A bramble-leaf or blade of grass.

Between the hedges as they go,
The white dust sleeps upon the lane;
And Peter, ever and anon
Back-looking, sees, upon a stone,
Or in the dust, a crimson stain.

A stain—as of a drop of blood
By moonlight made more faint and wan;
Ha! why these sinkings of despair?
He knows not how the blood comes there—
And Peter is a wicked man.

At length he spies a bleeding wound,
Where he had struck the Ass's head;
He sees the blood, knows what it is,—
A glimpse of sudden joy was his,
But then it quickly fled;

Of him whom sudden death had seized
He thought,—of thee, O faithful Ass!
And once again those ghastly pains,
Shoot to and fro through heart and reins,
And through his brain like lightning pass.

PART THIRD

I'VE heard of one, a gentle Soul,
Though given to sadness and to gloom,
And for the fact will vouch,—one night
It chanced that by a taper's light
This man was reading in his room;

Bending, as you or I might bend
At night o'er any pious book,
When sudden blackness overspread
The snow-white page on which he read,
And made the good man round him look.

The chamber walls were dark all round,—
And to his book he turned again;
—The light had left the lonely taper,
And formed itself upon the paper
Into large letters—bright and plain!

The godly book was in his hand—
And, on the page, more black than coal,
Appeared, set forth in strange array,
A *word*—which to his dying day
Perplexed the good man's gentle soul.

The ghostly word, thus plainly seen,
Did never from his lips depart;
But he hath said, poor gentle wight!
It brought full many a sin to light
Out of the bottom of his heart.

Dread Spirits! to confound the meek
Why wander from your course so far,
Disordering colour, form, and stature!
—Let good men feel the soul of nature,
And see things as they are.

Yet, potent Spirits! well I know,
How ye, that play with soul and sense,
Are not unused to trouble friends
Of goodness, for most gracious ends—
And this I speak in reverence!

But might I give advice to you,
Whom in my fear I love so well;
From men of pensive virtue go,
Dread Beings! and your empire show
On hearts like that of Peter Bell.

Your presence often have I felt
In darkness and the stormy night;
And, with like force, if need there be,
Ye can put forth your agency
When earth is calm, and heaven is bright.

Then, coming from the wayward world,
That powerful world in which ye dwell,
Come, Spirits of the Mind! and try
To-night, beneath the moonlight sky,
What may be done with Peter Bell!

—O, would that some more skilful voice
My further labour might prevent!
Kind Listeners, that around me sit,
I feel that I am all unfit
For such high argument.

I've played, I've danced, with my narration;
I loitered long ere I began:
Ye waited then on my good pleasure;
Pour out indulgence still, in measure
As liberal as ye can!

Our Travellers, ye remember well,
Are thridding a sequestered lane;
And Peter many tricks is trying,
And many anodynes applying,
To ease his conscience of its pain.

By this his heart is lighter far;
And, finding that he can account
So snugly for that crimson stain,
His evil spirit up again
Does like an empty bucket mount.

And Peter is a deep logician
Who hath no lack of wit mercurial;
"Blood drops—leaves rustle—yet," quoth he,
"This poor man never, but for me,
Could have had Christian burial.

"And, say the best you can, 'tis plain,
That here has been some wicked dealing;
No doubt the devil in me wrought;
I'm not the man who could have thought
An Ass like this was worth the stealing!"

So from his pocket Peter takes
His shining horn tobacco-box;
And, in a light and careless way,
As men who with their purpose play,
Upon the lid he knocks.

Let them whose voice can stop the clouds,
Whose cunning eye can see the wind,
Tell to a curious world the cause
Why, making here a sudden pause,
The Ass turned round his head, and *grinned*.

Appalling process! I have marked
The like on heath, in lonely wood;
And, verily, have seldom met
A spectacle more hideous—yet
It suited Peter's present mood.

And, grinning in his turn, his teeth
He in jocose defiance showed—
When, to upset his spiteful mirth,
A murmur, pent within the earth,
In the dead earth beneath the road

Rolled audibly! it swept along,
A muffled noise—a rumbling sound!—
'Twas by a troop of miners made,
Plying with gunpowder their trade,
Some twenty fathoms under ground.

Small cause of dire effect! for, surely,
If ever mortal, King or Cotter,
Believed that earth was charged to quake
And yawn for his unworthy sake,
'Twas Peter Bell the Potter.

But, as an oak in breathless air
Will stand though to the centre hewn;
Or as the weakest things, if frost
Have stiffened them, maintain their post;
So he, beneath the gazing moon!—

The Beast bestriding thus, he reached
A spot where, in a sheltering cove,
A little chapel stands alone,
With greenest ivy overgrown,
And tufted with an ivy grove;

Dying insensibly away
From human thoughts and purposes,
It seemed—wall, window, roof and tower
To bow to some transforming power,
And blend with the surrounding trees.

As ruinous a place it was,
Thought Peter, in the shire of Fife
That served my turn, when following still
From land to land a reckless will
I married my sixth wife!

The unheeding Ass moves slowly on,
And now is passing by an inn
Brim-full of a carousing crew,
That make, with curses not a few,
An uproar and a drunken din.

I cannot well express the thoughts
Which Peter in those noises found;—
A stifling power compressed his frame,
While-as a swimming darkness came
Over that dull and dreary sound.

For well did Peter know the sound;
The language of those drunken joys
To him, a jovial soul, I ween,
But a few hours ago, had been
A gladsome and a welcome noise.

Now, turned adrift into the past,
He finds no solace in his course;
Like planet-stricken men of yore,
He trembles, smitten to the core
By strong compunction and remorse.

But, more than all, his heart is stung
To think of one, almost a child;
A sweet and playful Highland girl,
As light and beauteous as a squirrel,
As beauteous and as wild!

Her dwelling was a lonely house,
A cottage in a heathy dell;
And she put on her gown of green,
And left her mother at sixteen,
And followed Peter Bell.

But many good and pious thoughts
Had she; and, in the kirk to pray,
Two long Scotch miles, through rain or snow
To kirk she had been used to go,
Twice every Sabbath-day.

And, when she followed Peter Bell,
It was to lead an honest life;
For he, with tongue not used to falter,
Had pledged his troth before the altar
To love her as his wedded wife.

A mother's hope is hers;—but soon
She drooped and pined like one forlorn.
From Scripture she a name did borrow;
Benoni, or the child of sorrow,
She called her babe unborn.

For she had learned how Peter lived,
And took it in most grievous part;
She to the very bone was worn,
And, ere that little child was born,
Died of a broken heart.

And now the Spirits of the Mind
Are busy with poor Peter Bell;
Upon the rights of visual sense
Usurping, with a prevalence
More terrible than magic spell.

Close by a brake of flowering furze
(Above it shivering aspens play)
He sees an unsubstantial creature,
His very self in form and feature,
Not four yards from the broad highway:

And stretched beneath the furze he sees
The Highland girl—it is no other;
And hears her crying as she cried,
The very moment that she died,
"My mother! oh my mother!"

The sweat pours down from Peter's face,
So grievous is his heart's contrition;
With agony his eye-balls ache
While he beholds by the furze-brake
This miserable vision!

Calm is the well-deserving brute,
His peace hath no offence betrayed;
But now, while down that slope he wends
A voice to Peter's ear ascends,
Resounding from the woody glade:

The voice, though clamorous as a horn
Re-echoed by a naked rock,
Comes from that tabernacle—List!
Within, a fervent Methodist
Is preaching to no heedless flock!

"Repent! repent!" he cries aloud,
"While yet ye may find mercy;—strive
To love the Lord with all your might;
Turn to him, seek him day and night,
And save your souls alive!

"Repent! repent! though ye have gone,
Through paths of wickedness and woe,
After the Babylonian harlot;
And, though your sins be red as scarlet,
They shall be white as snow!"

Even as he passed the door, these words
Did plainly come to Peter's ears;
And they such joyful tidings were,
The joy was more than he could bear!—
He melted into tears.

Sweet tears of hope and tenderness!
And fast they fell, a plenteous shower!
His nerves, his sinews seemed to melt;
Through all his iron frame was felt
A gentle, a relaxing, power!

Each fibre of his frame was weak;
Weak all the animal within;
But, in its helplessness, grew mild
And gentle as an infant child,
An infant that has known no sin.

'Tis said, meek Beast! that, through Heaven's grace,
He not unmoved did notice now
The cross upon thy shoulder scored,
For lasting impress, by the Lord
To whom all human-kind shall bow;

Memorial of his touch—that day
When Jesus humbly deigned to ride,
Entering the proud Jerusalem,
By an immeasurable stream
Of shouting people deified!

Meanwhile the persevering Ass,
Turned towards a gate that hung in view
Across a shady lane; his chest
Against the yielding gate he pressed
And quietly passed through.

And up the stony lane he goes;
No ghost more softly ever trod;
Among the stones and pebbles, he
Sets down his hoofs inaudibly,
As if with felt his hoofs were shod.

Along the lane the trusty Ass
Went twice two hundred yards or more,
And no one could have guessed his aim,—
Till to a lonely house he came,
And stopped beside the door.

Thought Peter, 'tis the poor man's home!
He listens—not a sound is heard
Save from the trickling household rill;
But, stepping o'er the cottage-sill,
Forthwith a little Girl appeared.

She to the Meeting-house was bound
In hopes some tidings there to gather:
No glimpse it is, no doubtful gleam;
She saw—and uttered with a scream,
"My father! here's my father!"

The very word was plainly heard,
Heard plainly by the wretched Mother—
Her joy was like a deep affright:
And forth she rushed into the light,
And saw it was another!

And, instantly, upon the earth,
Beneath the full moon shining bright,
Close to the Ass's feet she fell;
At the same moment Peter Bell
Dismounts in most unhappy plight.

As he beheld the Woman lie
Breathless and motionless, the mind
Of Peter sadly was confused;
But, though to such demands unused,
And helpless almost as the blind,

He raised her up; and, while he held
Her body propped against his knee,
The Woman waked—and when she spied
The poor Ass standing by her side,
She moaned most bitterly.

"Oh! God be praised—my heart's at ease—
For he is dead—I know it well!"
—At this she wept a bitter flood;
And, in the best way that he could,
His tale did Peter tell.

He trembles—he is pale as death;
His voice is weak with perturbation;
He turns aside his head, he pauses;
Poor Peter, from a thousand causes,
Is crippled sore in his narration.

At length she learned how he espied
The Ass in that small meadow-ground;
And that her Husband now lay dead,
Beside that luckless river's bed
In which he had been drowned.

A piercing look the Widow cast
Upon the Beast that near her stands;
She sees 'tis he, that 'tis the same;
She calls the poor Ass by his name,
And wrings, and wrings her hands.

"O wretched loss—untimely stroke!
If he had died upon his bed!
He knew not one forewarning pain;
He never will come home again—
Is dead, for ever dead!"

Beside the woman Peter stands;
His heart is opening more and more;
A holy sense pervades his mind;
He feels what he for human kind
Had never felt before.

At length, by Peter's arm sustained,
The Woman rises from the ground—
"Oh, mercy! something must be done,
My little Rachel, you must run,—
Some willing neighbour must be found.

"Make haste—my little Rachel—do,
The first you meet with—bid him come,
Ask him to lend his horse to-night,
And this good Man, whom Heaven requite,
Will help to bring the body home."

Away goes Rachel weeping loud;—
An Infant, waked by her distress,
Makes in the house a piteous cry;
And Peter hears the Mother sigh,
"Seven are they, and all fatherless!"

And now is Peter taught to feel
That man's heart is a holy thing;
And Nature, through a world of death,
Breathes into him a second breath,
More searching than the breath of spring.

Upon a stone the Woman sits
In agony of silent grief—
From his own thoughts did Peter start,
He longs to press her to his heart,
From love that cannot find relief.

But roused, as if through every limb
Had past a sudden shock of dread,
The Mother o'er the threshold flies,
And up the cottage stairs she hies,
And on the pillow lays her burning head.

And Peter turns his steps aside
Into a shade of darksome trees,
Where he sits down, he knows not how,
With his hands pressed against his brow,
His elbows on his tremulous knees.

There, self-involved, does Peter sit
Until no sign of life he makes,
As if his mind were sinking deep
Through years that have been long asleep
The trance is passed away—he wakes;

He lifts his head—and sees the Ass
Yet standing in the clear moonshine;
"When shall I be as good as thou?
Oh! would, poor beast, that I had now
A heart but half as good as thine!"

But *He*—who deviously hath sought
His Father through the lonesome woods,
Hath sought, proclaiming to the ear
Of night his grief and sorrowful fear—
He comes, escaped from fields and floods;—

With weary pace is drawing nigh;
He sees the Ass—and nothing living
Had ever such a fit of joy
As hath this little orphan Boy,
For he has no misgiving!

Forth to the gentle Ass he springs,
And up about his neck he climbs;
In loving words he talks to him,
He kisses, kisses face and limb,—
He kisses him a thousand times!

This Peter sees, while in the shade
He stood beside the cottage-door;
And Peter Bell, the ruffian wild,
Sobs loud, he sobs even like a child,
"O God! I can endure no more!"

—Here ends my Tale: for in a trice
Arrived a neighbour with his horse;
Peter went forth with him straightway;
And, with due care, ere break of day,
Together they brought back the Corse.

And many years did this poor Ass,
Whom once it was my luck to see
Cropping the shrubs of Leming-Lane,
Help by his labour to maintain
The Widow and her family.

And Peter Bell, who, till that night,
Had been the wildest of his clan,
Forsook his crimes, renounced his folly,
And, after ten months' melancholy,
Became a good and honest man. 1798.

THE SIMPLON PASS[1]

———Brook and road
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow step. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end. 1799.

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH

WRITTEN IN GERMANY[2]

This Extract is reprinted from "The Friend."

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought!
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man;
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage-windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,

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[1] See Prelude, book vi. p. 278.
[2] See Prelude, book i. p. 240.

Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star;
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

1799.

THERE WAS A BOY

Written in Germany. This is an extract from the poem on my own poetical education. This practice of making an instrument of their own fingers is known to most boys, though some are more skilful at it than others. William Raincock of Rayrigg, a fine spirited lad, took the lead of all my schoolfellows in this art.

There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him.—And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.
This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the church-yard hangs
Upon a slope above the village-school;
And, through that church-yard when my way has led
On summer-evenings, I believe, that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies!

1799.

NUTTING

Written in Germany; intended as part of a poem on my own life, but struck out as not being wanted there. Like most of my schoolfellows I was an impassioned nutter. For this pleasure, the vale of Esthwaite, abounding in coppice-wood, furnished a very wide range. These verses arose out of the remembrance of feelings I had often had when a boy, and particularly in the extensive woods that still stretch from the side of Esthwaite Lake towards Graythwaite, the seat of the ancient family of Sandys.

——————————It seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days that cannot die;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps

'Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal Dame—
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,
More raggèd than need was! O'er pathless rocks,
Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation; but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
A virgin scene!—A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet;—or beneath the trees I sate
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons re-appear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,
And—with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep—
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage: and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being: and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past;
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—
Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

1799.

The next three poems were written in Germany.

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

1799.

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
  Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
  And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

1799.

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

1799.

Composed in the Hartz Forest.

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs;
And her's shall be the breathing balm,
And her's the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

1799.

Written in Germany.

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

1799.

A POET'S EPITAPH

ART thou a Statist in the van
Of public conflicts trained and bred?
—First learn to love one living man;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh!
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practised eye,
The hardness of that sallow face.

Art thou a Man of purple cheer?
A rosy Man, right plump to see?
Approach; yet, Doctor, not too near,
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier and no man of chaff?
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant's staff.

Physician art thou? one, all eyes,
Philosopher! a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanise
Upon his mother's grave?

Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
O turn aside,—and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy ever-dwindling soul, away!

A Moralist perchance appears;
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod:
And he has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all!

Shut close the door; press down the latch;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust.

But who is He, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has viewed;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart,—
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak; both Man and Boy,
Hath been an idler in the land;
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

—Come hither in thy hour of strength;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
Here stretch thy body at full length;
Or build thy house upon this grave.

1799.

ADDRESS TO THE SCHOLARS OF THE VILLAGE SCHOOL OF ——

Composed at Goslar, in Germany.

I COME, ye little noisy Crew,
Not long your pastime to prevent;
I heard the blessing which to you
Our common Friend and Father sent.
I kissed his cheek before he died;
And when his breath was fled,
I raised, while kneeling by his side,
His hand:—it dropped like lead.
Your hands, dear Little-ones, do all
That can be done, will never fall
Like his till they are dead.
By night or day blow foul or fair,
Ne'er will the best of all your train
Play with the locks of his white hair,
Or stand between his knees again.
Here did he sit confined for hours;
But he could see the woods and plains,
Could hear the wind and mark the showers
Come streaming down the streaming panes.
Now stretched beneath his grass-green mound
He rests a prisoner of the ground.
He loved the breathing air,
He loved the sun, but if it rise
Or set, to him where now he lies,
Brings not a moment's care.
Alas! what idle words; but take
The Dirge which for our Master's sake
And yours, love prompted me to make.
The rhymes so homely in attire
With learned ears may ill agree,
But chanted by your Orphan Quire
Will make a touching melody.

DIRGE

Mourn, Shepherd, near thy old grey stone;
Thou Angler, by the silent flood;
And mourn when thou art all alone,
Thou Woodman, in the distant wood!

Thou one blind Sailor, rich in joy
Though blind, thy tunes in sadness hum;
And mourn, thou poor half-witted Boy!
Born deaf, and living deaf and dumb.

Thou drooping sick Man, bless the Guide
Who checked or turned thy headstrong youth,
As he before had sanctified
Thy infancy with heavenly truth.

Ye Striplings, light of heart and gay,
Bold settlers on some foreign shore,
Give, when your thoughts are turned this way,
A sigh to him whom we deplore.

For us who here in funeral strain
With one accord our voices raise,
Let sorrow overcharged with pain
Be lost in thankfulness and praise.

And when our hearts shall feel a sting
From ill we meet or good we miss,
May touches of his memory bring
Fond healing, like a mother's kiss.

1799.

BY THE SIDE OF THE GRAVE SOME YEARS AFTER

Long time his pulse hath ceased to beat
But benefits, his gift, we trace—
Expressed in every eye we meet
Round this dear Vale, his native place.

To stately Hall and Cottage rude
Flowed from his life what still they hold,
Light pleasures, every day, renewed;
And blessings half a century old.

Oh true of heart, of spirit gay,
Thy faults, where not already gone
From memory, prolong their stay
For charity's sweet sake alone.

Such solace find we for our loss;
And what beyond this thought we crave
Comes in the promise from the Cross,
Shining upon thy happy grave.

MATTHEW

In the School of —— is a tablet, on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the Names of the several persons who have been Schoolmasters there since the foundation of the School, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite to one of those names the Author wrote the following lines.

Such a Tablet as is here spoken of continued to be preserved in Hawkshead School, though the inscriptions were not brought down to our time. This and other poems connected with Matthew would not gain by a literal detail of facts. Like the Wanderer in "The Excursion," this Schoolmaster was made up of several both of his class and men of other occupations. I do not ask pardon for what there is of untruth in such verses, considered strictly as matters of fact. It is enough if, being true and consistent in spirit, they move and teach in a manner not unworthy of a Poet's calling.

If Nature, for a favourite child,
In thee hath tempered so her clay,
That every hour thy heart runs wild,
Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines; and then review
This tablet, that thus humbly rears
In such diversity of hue
Its history of two hundred years.

—When through this little wreck of fame,
Cipher and syllable! thine eye
Has travelled down to Matthew's name,
Pause with no common sympathy.

And, if a sleeping tear should wake,
Then be it neither checked nor stayed:
For Matthew a request I make
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
Is silent as a standing pool;
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heaved were sighs
Of one tired out with fun and madness;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

Yet, sometimes, when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round,
It seemed as if he drank it up—
He felt with spirit so profound.

—Thou soul of God's best earthly mould !
Thou happy Soul ! and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee ?

1799.

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS

We walked along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun ;
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
"The will of God be done !"

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering grey ;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the steaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun,
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought ?"

A second time did Matthew stop ;
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply :

"Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

"And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

"With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And, to the church-yard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter's grave.

"Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale ;
And then she sang ;—she would have been
A very nightingale.

"Six feet in earth my Emma lay ;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e'er had loved before.

"And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the church-yard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

"A basket on her head she bare ;
Her brow was smooth and white :
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight !

"No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free ;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

"There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine ;
I looked at her, and looked again :
And did not wish her mine !"

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand.

1799.

THE FOUNTAIN

A CONVERSATION

We talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat ;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew !" said I, "let us match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon ;

"Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made !"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee:

"No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears;
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

"And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

"Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

"The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please
Are quiet when they will.

"With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

"But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own;
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains;
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains;

"And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

1799.

TO A SEXTON

Written in Germany.

Let thy wheel-barrow alone—
Wherefore, Sexton, piling still
In thy bone-house bone on bone?
'Tis already like a hill
In a field of battle made,
Where three thousand skulls are laid;
These died in peace each with the other,—
Father, sister, friend, and brother.

Mark the spot to which I point!
From this platform, eight feet square,
Take not even a finger-joint:
Andrew's whole fire-side is there.
Here, alone, before thine eyes,
Simon's sickly daughter lies,
From weakness now, and pain defended,
Whom he twenty winters tended.

Look but at the gardener's pride—
How he glories, when he sees
Roses, lilies, side by side,
Violets in families!
By the heart of Man, his tears,
By his hopes and by his fears,
Thou, too heedless, art the Warden
Of a far superior garden.

Thus then, each to other dear,
Let them all in quiet lie,
Andrew there, and Susan here,
Neighbours in mortality.
And, should I live through sun and rain
Seven widowed years without my Jane,
O Sexton, do not then remove her,
Let one grave hold the Loved and Lover!

1799.

THE DANISH BOY

A FRAGMENT

Written in Germany. It was entirely a fancy; but intended as a prelude to a ballad-poem never written.

I

BETWEEN two sister moorland rills
There is a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flowerets of the hills,
And sacred to the sky.
And in this smooth and open dell
There is a tempest-stricken tree;
A corner-stone by lightning cut,
The last stone of a lonely hut;
And in this dell you see
A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
The shadow of a Danish Boy.

II

In clouds above, the lark is heard,
But drops not here to earth for rest;
Within this lonesome nook the bird
Did never build her nest.
No beast, no bird hath here his home;
Bees, wafted on the breezy air,
Pass high above those fragrant bells
To other flowers:—to other dells
Their burthens do they bear;
The Danish Boy walks here alone:
The lovely dell is all his own.

III

A Spirit of noon-day is he;
Yet seems a form of flesh and blood;
Nor piping shepherd shall he be,
Nor herd-boy of the wood.
A regal vest of fur he wears,
In colour like a raven's wing;
It fears not rain, nor wind, nor dew;
But in the storm 'tis fresh and blue
As budding pines in spring;
His helmet has a vernal grace,
Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

IV

A harp is from his shoulder slung;
Resting the harp upon his knee,
To words of a forgotten tongue
He suits its melody.
Of flocks upon the neighbouring hill
He is the darling and the joy;
And often, when no cause appears,
The mountain-ponies prick their ears,
—They hear the Danish Boy,
While in the dell he sings alone
Beside the tree and corner-stone.

V

There sits he; in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.
The lovely Danish Boy is blest
And happy in his flowery cove:
From bloody deeds his thoughts are far;
And yet he warbles songs of war,
That seem like songs of love,
For calm and gentle is his mien;
Like a dead Boy he is serene.

1799.

LUCY GRAY

OR, SOLITUDE

Written at Goslar in Germany. It was founded on a circumstance told me by my Sister, of a little girl who, not far from Halifax in Yorkshire, was bewildered in a snow-storm. Her footsteps were traced by her parents to the middle of the lock of a canal, and no other vestige of her, backward or forward, could be traced. The body however was found in the canal. The way in which the incident was treated and the spiritualising of the character might furnish hints for contrasting the imaginative influences which I have endeavoured to throw over common life with Crabbe's matter of fact style of treating subjects of the same kind. This is not spoken to his disparagement, far from it, but to direct the attention of thoughtful readers, into whose hands these notes may fall, to a comparison that may both enlarge the circle of their sensibilities, and tend to produce in them a catholic judgment.

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet;"
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

1799.

RUTH

Written in Germany. Suggested by an account
I had of a wanderer in Somersetshire.

When Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live; her thoughts her own,
Herself her own delight;
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay;
And, passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a Youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore,
With splendid feathers drest;
He brought them from the Cherokees;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
But no! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier's name;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the Youth could speak:
—While he was yet a boy,
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely Youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he;
And, when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a Youth, in the green shade
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls—a happy rout!
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues;
With budding, fading, faded flowers
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head!
The cypress and her spire;
—Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannahs spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

"How pleasant," then he said, "it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade
To wander with an easy mind;
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade!

"What days and what bright years! Ah me!
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So passed in quiet bliss,
And all the while," said he, "to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this!"

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father's love;
"For there," said he, "are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

"Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer!

"Belovèd Ruth!"—No more he said,
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear:
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

"And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife."
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers;
The breezes their own languor lent;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favoured bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions linked to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires:
A Man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the Maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn:
What could he less than love a Maid
Whose heart with so much nature played?
So kind and so forlorn!

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
"O Ruth! I have been worse than dead;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had crossed the Atlantic main.

"Before me shone a glorious world—
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
To music suddenly:
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains,
To live at liberty.

"No more of this; for now, by thee
Dear Ruth! more happily set free
With nobler zeal I burn;
My soul from darkness is released,
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return."

Full soon that better mind was gone;
No hope, no wish remained, not one,—
They stirred him now no more;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore,
But, when they thither came the Youth
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth!—Such pains she had,
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May;
—They all were with her in her cell;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain;
She from her prison fled;
But of the Vagrant none took thought;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again:
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free;
And, coming to the Banks of Tone,
There did she rest; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves—she loved them still;
Nor ever taxed them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies;
But, till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!
And Ruth will, long before her day,
Be broken down and old:
Sore aches she needs must have! but less
Of mind, than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food,
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side;
And there she begs at one steep place
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away; but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers:
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild—
Such small machinery as she turned
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy Child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mould
Thy corpse shall buried be,
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

1799.

WRITTEN IN GERMANY

ON ONE OF THE COLDEST DAYS OF THE CENTURY

A bitter winter it was when these verses were composed by the side of my Sister, in our lodgings at a draper's house in the romantic imperial town of Goslar, on the edge of the Hartz Forest. In this town the German emperors of the Franconian line were accustomed to keep their court, and it retains vestiges of ancient splendour. So severe was the cold of this winter, that when we passed out of the parlour warmed by the stove, our cheeks were struck by the air as by cold iron. I slept in a room over a passage which was not ceiled. The people of the house used to say, rather unfeelingly, that they expected I should be frozen to death some night; but, with the protection of a pelisse lined with fur, and a dog's-skin bonnet, such as was worn by the peasants, I walked daily on the ramparts, or in a sort of public ground or garden, in which was a pond. Here, I had no companion but a kingfisher, a beautiful creature, that used to glance by me. I consequently became much attached to it. During these walks I composed the poem that follows.

The Reader must be apprised, that the Stoves in North-Germany generally have the impression of a galloping horse upon them, this being part of the Brunswick Arms.

A PLAGUE on your languages, German and Norse!
Let me have the song of the kettle;
And the tongs and the poker, instead of that horse
That gallops away with such fury and force
On this dreary dull plate of black metal.

See that Fly,—a disconsolate creature! perhaps
A child of the field or the grove;
And, sorrow for him! the dull treacherous heat
Has seduced the poor fool from his winter retreat,
And he creeps to the edge of my stove.

Alas! how he fumbles about the domains
Which this comfortless oven environ!
He cannot find out in what track he must crawl,
Now back to the tiles, then in search of the wall,
And now on the brink of the iron.

Stock-still there he stands like a traveller bemazed:
The best of his skill he has tried;
His feelers, methinks, I can see him put forth
To the east and the west, to the south and the north;
But he finds neither guide-post nor guide.

His spindles sink under him, foot, leg, and thigh!
His eyesight and hearing are lost;

Between life and death his blood freezes and thaws;
And his two pretty pinions of blue dusky gauze
Are glued to his sides by the frost.

No brother, no mate has he near him—while I
Can draw warmth from the cheek of my Love;
As blest and as glad, in this desolate gloom,
As if green summer grass were the floor of my room,
And woodbines were hanging above.

Yet, God is my witness, thou small helpless Thing!
Thy life I would gladly sustain
Till summer come up from the south, and with crowds
Of thy brethren a march thou should'st sound through the clouds,
And back to the forests again!

1799.

THE BROTHERS

This poem was composed in a grove at the north-eastern end of Grasmere lake, which grove was in a great measure destroyed by turning the high-road along the side of the water. The few trees that are left were spared at my intercession. The poem arose out of the fact, mentioned to me at Ennerdale, that a shepherd had fallen asleep upon the top of the rock called The Pillar, and perished as here described, his staff being left midway on the rock.

'THESE Tourists, heaven preserve us! needs must live
A profitable life: some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as the summer lasted: some, as wise,
Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.
But, for that moping Son of Idleness,
Why can he tarry *yonder*?—In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name—only the turf we tread
And a few natural graves."
To Jane, his wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.
It was a July evening; and he sate
Upon the long stone-seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage,—as it chanced, that day,
Employed in winter's work. Upon the stone
His wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards toothed with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who, in the open air, with due accord
Of busy hands and back-and-forward steps,
Her large round wheel was turning. Towards the field
In which the Parish Chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder: and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-white ridge
Of carded wool which the old man had piled
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other locked; and, down the path
That from his cottage to the church-yard led,
He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.
'Twas one well known to him in former days,
A Shepherd-lad; who ere his sixteenth year
Had left that calling, tempted to entrust
His expectations to the fickle winds
And perilous waters; with the mariners
A fellow-mariner;—and so had fared
Through twenty seasons; but he had been reared
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees:—and, when the regular wind
Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line

Along the cloudless Main, he, in those hours
Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze;
And, while the broad blue wave and sparkling foam
Flashed round him images and hues that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
Saw mountains; saw the forms of sheep that grazed
On verdant hills—with dwellings among trees,
And shepherds clad in the same country grey
Which he himself had worn.[1]
And now, at last,
From perils manifold, with some small wealth
Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there; both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother-shepherds on their native hills.
—They were the last of all their race: and now,
When Leonard had approached his home, his heart
Failed in him; and, not venturing to enquire
Tidings of one so long and dearly loved,
He to the solitary churchyard turned;
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added.—He had found
Another grave,—near which a full half-hour
He had remained; but, as he gazed, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt; and even to hope
That he had seen this heap of turf before,—
That it was not another grave; but one
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walked
Through fields which once had been well known to him:
And oh what joy this recollection now
Sent to his heart! he lifted up his eyes,
And, looking round, imagined that he saw
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
And everlasting hills themselves were changed.
By this the Priest, who down the field had come,
Unseen by Leonard, at the churchyard gate
Stopped short,—and thence, at leisure, limb by limb
Perused him with a gay complacency.
Ay, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
Of the world's business to go wild alone:
His arms have a perpetual holiday;
The happy man will creep about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write fool upon his forehead.—Planted thus
Beneath a shed that over-arched the gate
Of this rude churchyard, till the stars appeared
The good Man might have communed with himself,
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
Approached; he recognised the Priest at once,
And, after greetings interchanged, and given
By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.
Leonard. You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet life:
Your years make up one peaceful family;
And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
They cannot be remembered? Scarce a funeral

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[1] This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, author of the *Hurricane*.

Comes to this churchyard once in eighteen months;
And yet, some changes must take place among you:
And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks,
Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our threescore years and ten
We are not all that perish.——I remember,
(For many years ago I passed this road)
There was a foot-way all along the fields
By the brook-side—'tis gone—and that dark cleft!
To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it had!
Priest. Nay, Sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same—
Leonard. But, surely, yonder—
Priest. Ay, there, indeed, your memory is a friend
That does not play you false.—On that tall pike
(It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
There were two springs which bubbled side by side,
As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other: the huge crag
Was rent with lightning—one hath disappeared;
The other, left behind, is flowing still.
For accidents and changes such as these,
We want not store of them;—a water-spout
Will bring down half a mountain; what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you,
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract! a sharp May-storm
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens; or a shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks:
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge;
A wood is felled:—and then for our own homes!
A child is born or christened, a field ploughed,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house-clock is decked with a new face;
And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries,—one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fire-side—
Yours was a stranger's judgment: for historians,
Commend me to these valleys!
Leonard. Yet your Churchyard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
To say that you are heedless of the past:
An orphan could not find his mother's grave:
Here's neither head nor foot stone, plate of brass,
Cross-bones nor skull,—type of our earthly state
Nor emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
Is but a fellow to that pasture-field.
Priest. Why, there, Sir, is a thought that's new to me!
The stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg their bread
If every English churchyard were like ours;
Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth
We have no need of names and epitaphs;
We talk about the dead by our firesides.
And then, for our immortal part! *we* want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.
Leonard. Your Dalesmen, then, do in each other's thoughts
Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?
Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might; and, on a winter-evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there's a grave—your foot is half upon it,—
It looks just like the rest; and yet that man
Died broken-hearted.
Leonard. 'Tis a common case.

We'll take another: who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves?
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the church-yard wall.
Priest. That's Walter Ewbank.
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produced by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
Through five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage—
You see it yonder! and those few green fields.
They toiled and wrought, and still, from sire to son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before
A little—yet a little,—and old Walter,
They left to him the family heart, and land
With other burthens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still kept up
A cheerful mind,—and buffeted with bond,
Interest, and mortgages; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.
Poor Walter! whether it was care that spurred him
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale:
His pace was never that of an old man:
I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two grandsons after him:—but you,
Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel,—and on these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer—
Leonard. But those two Orphans!
Priest. Orphans!—Such they were—
Yet not while Walter lived: for, though their parents
Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears,
Shed when he talked of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old Man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them.—If you weep, Sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred!
Ay—you may turn that way—it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.
Leonard. These boys—I hope
They loved this good old Man?—
Priest. They did—and truly:
But that was what we almost overlooked,
They were such darlings of each other.
Yes,
Though from the cradle they had lived with Walter,
The only kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to both by reason of his age,
With a more fond, familiar, tenderness;
They, notwithstanding, had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
Was two years taller: 'twas a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them!—From their house the school
Is distant three short miles, and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every watercourse
And unbridged stream, such as you may have noticed
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys remained
At home, go staggering through the slippery fords,
Bearing his brother on his back. I have seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Ay, more than once I have seen him, mid-leg deep,
Their two books lying both on a dry stone,
Upon the hither side: and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety—
Leonard. It may be then—
Priest. Never did worthier lads break English bread:
The very brightest Sunday Autumn saw
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep those boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath breach.

Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks, and every hollow place
That venturous foot could reach, to one or both
Was known as well as to the flowers that grow there.
Like roe-bucks they went bounding o'er the hills;
They played like two young ravens on the crags:
Then they could write, ay and speak too, as well
As many of their betters—and for Leonard!
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I'd wager house and field
That, if he be alive, he has it yet.
Leonard. It seems, these Brothers have not lived to be
A comfort to each other—
Priest. That they might
Live to such end is what both old and young
In this our valley all of us have wished,
And what, for my part, I have often prayed:
But Leonard—
Leonard. Then James still is left among you!
Priest. 'Tis of the elder brother I am speaking:
They had an uncle;—he was at that time
A thriving man, and trafficked on the seas:
And, but for that same uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud:
For the boy loved the life which we lead here;
And though of unripe years, a stripling only,
His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent; when he died,
The estate and house were sold; and all their sheep,
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years:—
Well—all was gone, and they were destitute,
And Leonard, chiefly for his Brother's sake,
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.
Twelve years are past since we had tidings from him.
If there were one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
From the Great Gavel,[1] down by Leeza's banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a joyous festival;
And those two bells of ours, which there you see—
Hanging in the open air—but, O good Sir!
This is sad talk—they'll never sound for him—
Living or dead.—When last we heard of him,
He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary coast.—'Twas not a little
That would bring down his spirit; and no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the Youth
Was sadly crossed.—Poor Leonard! when we parted,
He took me by the hand, and said to me,
If e'er he should grow rich, he would return,
To live in peace upon his father's land,
And lay his bones among us.
Leonard. If that day
Should come, 'twould needs be a glad day for him;
He would himself, no doubt, be happy then
As any that should meet him—
Priest. Happy! Sir—
Leonard. You said his kindred all were in their graves,
And that he had one Brother—
Priest That is but
A fellow-tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate;
And Leonard being always by his side
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a mountain-boy
In him was somewhat checked; and, when his Brother
Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,
The little colour that he had was soon

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[1] The Great Gavel, so called, I imagine, from its resemblance to the gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale.

The Leeza is a river which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale: on issuing from the Lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

Stolen from his cheek; he drooped, and pined, and pined—
Leonard. But these are all the graves of full-grown men!
Priest. Ay, Sir, that passed away: we took him to us;
He was the child of all the dale—he lived
Three months with one, and six months with another,
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love:
And many, many happy days were his.
But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief
His absent Brother still was at his heart.
And, when he dwelt beneath our roof, we found
(A practice till this time unknown to him)
That often, rising from his bed at night,
He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
He sought his brother Leonard.—You are moved!
Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you,
I judged you most unkindly.
Leonard. But this Youth,
How did he die at last?
Priest. One sweet May-morning,
(It will be twelve years since when Spring returns)
He had gone forth among the new-dropped lambs,
With two or three companions, whom their course
Of occupation led from height to height
Under a cloudless sun—till he, at length,
Through weariness, or, haply, to indulge
The humour of the moment, lagged behind.
You see yon precipice;—it wears the shape
Of a vast building made of many crags;
And in the midst is one particular rock
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our shepherds it is called, THE PILLAR.
Upon its aëry summit crowned with heath,
The loiterer, not unnoticed by his comrades,
Lay stretched at ease; but, passing by the place
On their return, they found that he was gone.
No ill was feared; till one of them by chance
Entering, when evening was far spent, the house
Which at that time was James's home, there learned
That nobody had seen him all that day:
The morning came, and still he was unhear of:
The neighbours were alarmed, and to the brook
Some hastened; some ran to the lake: ere noon
They found him at the foot of that sam rock
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The thir day after
I buried him, poor Youth, and there he lies
Leonard. And that then *is* his grave!—Before his death
You say that he saw many happy years?
Priest. Ay, that he did—
Leonard. And all went well with him?—
Priest. If he had one, the Youth ha twenty homes.
Leonard. And you believe, then, that hi mind was easy?—
Priest. Yes, long before he died, he foun that time
Is a true friend to sorrow; and unless
His thoughts were turned on Leonard' luckless fortune,
He talked about him with a cheerful love.
Leonard. He could not come to an unhallowed end!
Priest. Nay, God forbid!—You recollec I mentioned
A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him; and we all conjectured
That, as the day was warm, he had lai down
On the soft heath,—and, waiting for hi comrades,
He there had fallen asleep; that in his slee
He to the margin of the precipice
Had walked, and from the summit ha fallen headlong:
And so no doubt he perished. When th Youth
Fell, in his hand he must have grasped, w think,
His shepherd's staff; for on that Pillar o rock
It had been caught mid-way; and there fo years
It hung;—and mouldered there.
The Priest here ended—

The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt
A gushing from his heart, that took away
The power of speech. Both left the spot in silence;
And Leonard, when they reached the churchyard gate,
As the Priest lifted up the latch, turned round,—
And, looking at the grave, he said, "My Brother!"
The Vicar did not hear the words: and now,
He pointed towards his dwelling-place, entreating
That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
The other thanked him with an earnest voice;
But added, that, the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.
It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove
That overhung the road: he there stopped short,
And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed
All that the Priest had said: his early years
Were with him:—his long absence, cherished hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
All pressed on him with such a weight, that now,
This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed
A place in which he could not bear to live:
So he relinquished all his purposes.
He travelled back to Egremont: and thence,
That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest,
Reminding him of what had passed between them;
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart
He had not dared to tell him who he was.
This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a grey-headed Mariner.

1800.

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

Written at Town-end, Grasmere, about the same time as "The Brothers." The Sheepfold, on which so much of the poem turns, remains, or rather the ruins of it. The character and circumstances of Luke were taken from a family to whom had belonged, many years before, the house we lived in at Town-end, along with some fields and woodlands on the eastern shore of Grasmere. The name of the Evening Star was not in fact given to this house, but to another on the same side of the valley, more to the north.

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)

On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.
  Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honourable gain;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.
  His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labour did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.
Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE,[1] a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.
And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,

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[1] Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.
But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?
Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.
While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?"
At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,

And, at his birth-place, built a chapel, floored
With marble which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
—Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.
With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.
Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him:—"My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.——After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls

To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fire-side
First uttering, without words, a natural tune ;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains ; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke : among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart ; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
  Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father : and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands ; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together : here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done ; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived :
But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me ;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled ; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go."
                At this the old Man paused ;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed :
"This was a work for us ; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope ;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale ;—do thou thy part ;
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee :
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy !
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes ; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke : thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love : when thou art gone,
What will be left to us !—But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested ; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment ; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee : amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou

May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."
The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.
A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.
There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.
There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood:—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.
1800.

THE IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS;

OR, DUNGEON-GHYLL FORCE [1]

A PASTORAL

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. I will only add a little monitory anecdote concerning this subject. When Coleridge and Southey were walking together upon the Fells, Southey observed that, if I wished to be considered a faithful painter of rural manners, I ought not to have said that my Shepherd-boys trimmed their rustic hats as described in the poem. Just as the words had passed his lips two boys appeared with the very plant entwined round their hats. I have often wondered that Southey, who rambled so much about the mountains, should have fallen into this mistake, and I record it as a warning for others who, with far less opportunity than my dear friend had of knowing what things are, and far less sagacity, give way to presumptuous criticism, from which he was free, though in this matter mistaken. In describing a tarn under Helvellyn, I say—

> "There sometimes doth a leaping fish
> Send through the tarn a lonely cheer."

This was branded by a critic of these days, in a review ascribed to Mrs. Barbauld, as unnatural and absurd. I admire the genius of Mrs. Barbauld, and am certain that, had her education been favourable to imaginative influences, no female of her day would have been more likely to sympathise with that image, and to acknowledge the truth of the sentiment.

THE valley rings with mirth and joy;
Among the hills the echoes play
A never never ending song,
To welcome in the May.
The magpie chatters with delight;
The mountain raven's youngling brood
Have left the mother and the nest;
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food;
Or through the glittering vapours dart
In very wantonness of heart.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two boys are sitting in the sun;
Their work, if any work they have,
Is out of mind—or done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas hymn;
Or with that plant which in our dale
We call stag-horn, or fox's tail,
Their rusty hats they trim:
And thus, as happy as the day,
Those Shepherds wear the time away.

Along the river's stony marge
The sand-lark chants a joyous song;
The thrush is busy in the wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand lambs are on the rocks,
All newly born! both earth and sky
Keep jubilee, and more than all,
Those boys with their green coronal;
They never hear the cry,
That plaintive cry! which up the hill
Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Ghyll.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
"Down to the stump of yon old yew
We'll for our whistles run a race."
——Away the shepherds flew;
They leapt—they ran—and when they came
Right opposite to Dungeon-Ghyll,
Seeing that he should lose the prize,
"Stop!" to his comrade Walter cries—
James stopped with no good will:
Said Walter then, exulting; "Here
You'll find a task for half a year.

"Cross, if you dare, where I shall cross—
Come on, and tread where I shall tread."
The other took him at his word,
And followed as he led.
It was a spot which you may see
If ever you to Langdale go;
Into a chasm a mighty block
Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock:
The gulf is deep below;
And, in a basin black and small,
Receives a lofty waterfall.

With staff in hand across the cleft
The challenger pursued his march;
And now, all eyes and feet, hath gained
The middle of the arch.
When list! he hears a piteous moan—
Again!—his heart within him dies—
His pulse is stopped, his breath is lost,
He totters, pallid as a ghost,

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[1] *Ghyll*, in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland, is a short and, for the most part, a steep narrow valley, with a stream running through it. *Force* is the word universally employed in these dialects for waterfall.

And, looking down, espies
A lamb, that in the pool is pent
Within that black and frightful rent.

The lamb had slipped into the stream,
And safe without a bruise or wound
The cataract had borne him down
Into the gulf profound.
His dam had seen him when he fell,
She saw him down the torrent borne;
And, while with all a mother's love
She from the lofty rocks above
Sent forth a cry forlorn,
The lamb, still swimming round and round,
Made answer to that plaintive sound.

When he had learnt what thing it was,
That sent this rueful cry; I ween
The Boy recovered heart, and told
The sight which he had seen.
Both gladly now deferred their task;
Nor was there wanting other aid—
A Poet, one who loves the brooks
Far better than the sages' books,
By chance had thither strayed;
And there the helpless lamb he found
By those huge rocks encompassed round.

He drew it from the troubled pool,
And brought it forth into the light:
The Shepherds met him with his charge,
An unexpected sight!
Into their arms the lamb they took,
Whose life and limbs the flood had spared;
Then up the steep ascent they hied,
And placed him at his mother's side;
And gently did the Bard
Those idle Shepherd-boys upbraid,
And bade them better mind their trade.
1800.

THE PET-LAMB

A PASTORAL

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Barbara Lewthwaite, now living at Ambleside (1843), though much changed as to beauty, was one of two most lovely sisters. Almost the first words my poor brother John said, when he visited us for the first time at Grasmere, were, "Were those two Angels that I have just seen?" and from his description I have no doubt they were those two sisters. The mother died in childbed; and one of our neighbours at Grasmere told me that the loveliest sight she had ever seen was that mother as she lay in her coffin with her babe in her arm. I mention this to notice what I cannot but think a salutary custom once universal in these vales. Every attendant on a funeral made it a duty to look at the corpse in the coffin before the lid was closed, which was never done (nor I believe is now) till a minute or two before the corpse was removed. Barbara Lewthwaite was not in fact the child whom I had seen and overheard as described in the poem. I chose the name for reasons implied in the above; and will here add a caution against the use of names of living persons. Within a few months after the publication of this poem, I was much surprised, and more hurt, to find it in a child's school-book which, having been compiled by Lindley Murray, had come into use at Grasmere School where Barbara was a pupil; and, alas! I had the mortification of hearing that she was very vain of being thus distinguished; and, in after-life, she used to say that she remembered the incident and what I said to her upon the occasion.

THE dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink;
I heard a voice; it said, "Drink, pretty creature, drink!"
And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain-lamb with a Maiden at its side.

Nor sheep nor kine were near; the lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone;
With one knee on the grass did the little Maiden kneel,
While to that mountain-lamb she gave its evening meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,
Seemed to feast with head and ears; and his tail with pleasure shook.
"Drink, pretty creature, drink," she said in such a tone
That I almost received her heart into my own.

'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare!
I watched them with delight, they were a lovely pair.
Now with her empty can the Maiden turned away:

But ere ten yards were gone her footsteps did she stay.

Right towards the lamb she looked; and from a shady place
I unobserved could see the workings of her face:
If Nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little Maid might sing:

"What ails thee, young One? what? Why pull so at thy cord?
Is it not well with thee? well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be;
Rest, little young One, rest; what is't that aileth thee?

"What is it thou wouldst seek? What is wanting to thy heart?
Thy limbs are they not strong? And beautiful thou art:
This grass is tender grass; these flowers they have no peers;
And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears!

"If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy woollen chain,
This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst gain;
For rain and mountain-storms! the like thou need'st not fear,
The rain and storm are things that scarcely can come here.

"Rest, little young One, rest; thou hast forgot the day
When my father found thee first in places far away;
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned by none,
And thy mother from thy side for evermore was gone.

"He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home:
A blessèd day for thee! then whither wouldst thou roam?
A faithful nurse thou hast; the dam that did thee yean
Upon the mountain-tops no kinder could have been.

"Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought thee in this can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran;
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is and new.

"Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they are now,
Then I'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the plough;
My playmate thou shalt be; and when the wind is cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy fold.

"It will not, will not rest!—Poor creature, can it be
That 'tis thy mother's heart which is working so in thee?
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see nor hear.

"Alas, the mountain-tops that look so green and fair!
I've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come there;
The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play,
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

"Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky;
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage is hard by.
Why bleat so after me? Why pull so at thy chain?
Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee again!"

—As homeward through the lane I went with lazy feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,

That but half of it was hers, and one half of it was *mine*.

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song;
"Nay," said I, "more than half to the damsel must belong,
For she looked with such a look and she spake with such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my own." 1800.

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES

ADVERTISEMENT

By persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little Incidents must have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such Incidents, and renew the gratification of such feelings, Names have been given to Places by the Author and some of his Friends, and the following Poems written in consequence.

I

Written at Grasmere. This poem was suggested on the banks of the brook that runs through Easedale, which is, in some parts of its course, as wild and beautiful as brook can be. I have composed thousands of verses by the side of it.

It was an April morning: fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed; and yet the voice
Of waters which the winter had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone.
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living things
Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
The budding groves seemed eager to urge on
The steps of June; as if their various hues
Were only hindrances that stood between
Them and their object: but, meanwhile, prevailed
Such an entire contentment in the air
That every naked ash, and tardy tree
Yet leafless, showed as if the countenance
With which it looked on this delightful day
Were native to the summer.—Up the brook
I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
Alive to all things and forgetting all.
At length I to a sudden turning came
In this continuous glen, where down a rock
The Stream, so ardent in its course before,
Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
Which I till then had heard, appeared the voice
Of common pleasure: beast and bird, the lamb,
The shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush
Vied with this waterfall, and made a song,
Which, while I listened, seemed like the wild growth
Or like some natural produce of the air,
That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here;
But 'twas the foliage of the rocks—the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
And, on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain-cottage might be seen.
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,
"Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook,
My EMMA, I will dedicate to thee."
——Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of EMMA'S DELL.
1800.

II

TO JOANNA

Written at Grasmere. The effect of her laugh is an extravagance; though the effect of the reverberation of voices in some parts of the mountains is very striking. There is, in the "Excursion," an allusion to the bleat of a lamb thus re-echoed, and described without any exaggeration, as I heard it, on the side of Stickle Tarn, from the precipice that stretches on to Langdale Pikes.

AMID the smoke of cities did you pass
The time of early youth; and there you learned,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living Beings by your own fireside,
With such a strong devotion, that your heart
Is slow to meet the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.
Yet we, who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling retired in our simplicity
Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
Joanna! and I guess, since you have been
So distant from us now for two long years,
That you will gladly listen to discourse,
However trivial, if you thence be taught
That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
Familiarly of you and of old times.
While I was seated, now some ten days past,
Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
Their ancient neighbour, the old steeple-tower,
The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
Came forth to greet me; and when he had asked,
"How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted Maid!
And when will she return to us?" he paused;
And, after short exchange of village news,
He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,
Reviving obsolete idolatry,
I, like a Runic Priest, in characters
Of formidable size had chiselled out
Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
Above the Rotha, by the forest-side.
—Now, by those dear immunities of heart
Engendered between malice and true love,
I was not loth to be so catechised,
And this was my reply:—"As it befell,
One summer morning we had walked abroad
At break of day, Joanna and myself.
—'Twas that delightful season when the broom,
Full-flowered, and visible on every steep,
Along the copses runs in veins of gold.
Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks;
And when we came in front of that tall rock
That eastward looks, I there stopped short—and stood
Tracing the lofty barrier with my eye
From base to summit; such delight I found
To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower
That intermixture of delicious hues,
Along so vast a surface, all at once,
In one impression, by connecting force
Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
—When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,
Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.
The Rock, like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again;
That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-scar,
And the tall Steep of Silver-how, sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone;
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the Lady's voice,—old Skiddaw blew
His speaking-trumpet;—back out of the clouds
Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.
—Now whether (said I to our cordial Friend,
Who in the hey-day of astonishment
Smiled in my face) this were in simple truth
A work accomplished by the brotherhood
Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touched
With dreams and visionary impulses
To me alone imparted, sure I am
That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
And, while we both were listening, to my side
The fair Joanna drew, as if she wished
To shelter from some object of her fear.
—And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
Beneath this rock, at sunrise, on a calm
And silent morning, I sat down, and there

In memory of affections old and true,
I chiselled out in those rude characters
Joanna's name deep in the living stone:—
And I, and all who dwell by my fireside,
Have called the lovely rock, JOANNA'S ROCK."
1800.

NOTE.—In Cumberland and Westmoreland are several Inscriptions, upon the native rock, which, from the wasting of time, and the rudeness of the workmanship, have been mistaken for Runic. They are without doubt Roman.

The Rotha, mentioned in this poem, is the River which, flowing through the lakes of Grasmere and Rydale, falls into Wynandermere. On Helm-crag, that impressive single mountain at the head of the Vale of Grasmere, is a rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an old Woman cowering. Close by this rock is one of those fissures or caverns, which in the language of the country are called dungeons. Most of the mountains here mentioned immediately surround the Vale of Grasmere; of the others, some are at a considerable distance, but they belong to the same cluster.

III

It is not accurate that the Eminence here alluded to could be seen from our orchard-seat. It rises above the road by the side of Grasmere lake, towards Keswick, and its name is Stone-Arthur.

THERE is an Eminence,—of these our hills
The last that parleys with the setting sun;
We can behold it from our orchard-seat;
And, when at evening we pursue our walk
Along the public way, this Peak, so high
Above us, and so distant in its height,
Is visible; and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
The meteors make of it a favourite haunt:
The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion, that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude to me,
Hath to this lonely Summit given my Name.
1800.

IV

The character of the eastern shore of Grasmere lake is quite changed, since these verses were written, by the public road being carried along its side. The friends spoken of were Coleridge and my Sister, and the facts occurred strictly as recorded.

A NARROW girdle of rough stones and crags,
A rude and natural causeway, interposed
Between the water and a winding slope
Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy:
And there myself and two belovèd Friends,
One calm September morning, ere the mist
Had altogether yielded to the sun,
Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.
——Ill suits the road with one in haste; but we
Played with our time; and, as we strolled along,
It was our occupation to observe
Such objects as the waves had tossed ashore—
Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered bough,
Each on the other heaped, along the line
Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand!
And starting off again with freak as sudden;
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its playmate, rather say, its moving soul.
——And often, trifling with a privilege
Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
And now the other, to point out, perchance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are,
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall fern,
So stately, of the queen Osmunda named;
Plant lovelier, in its own retired abode

On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.
—So fared we that bright morning: from the fields
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of reapers, men and women, boys and girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
And feeding thus our fancies, we advanced
Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze was seen
Before us, on a point of jutting land,
The tall and upright figure of a Man
Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
Angling beside the margin of the lake.
"Improvident and reckless," we exclaimed,
"The Man must be, who thus can lose a day
Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter time."
Thus talking of that Peasant, we approached
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone; whereat he turned his head
To greet us—and we saw a Man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I looked at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustained.—
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The Man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
—Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then received
The same admonishment, have called the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by mariner was given to bay
Or foreland, on a new-discovered coast;
And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the name it bears.

1800.

V

TO M. H.

The pool alluded to is in Rydal Upper Park.

OUR walk was far among the ancient trees:
There was no road, nor any woodman's path;
But a thick umbrage—checking the wild growth
Of weed and sapling, along soft green turf
Beneath the branches—of itself had made
A track, that brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods.
All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
On its firm margin, even as from a well,
Or some stone-basin which the herdsman's hand
Had shaped for their refreshment; nor did sun,
Or wind from any quarter, ever come,
But as a blessing to this calm recess,
This glade of water and this one green field.
The spot was made by Nature for herself;
The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain
Unknown to them; but it is beautiful;
And if a man should plant his cottage near,
Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
And blend its waters with his daily meal,
He would so love it, that in his death-hour
Its image would survive among his thoughts:
And therefore, my sweet MARY, this still Nook,
With all its beeches, we have named from You!

1800.

THE WATERFALL AND THE EGLANTINE

Suggested nearer to Grasmere, on the same mountain track as that referred to in the following Note. The Eglantine remained many years afterwards, but is now gone.

I

"BEGONE, thou fond presumptuous Elf,"
Exclaimed an angry Voice,
"Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!"
A small Cascade fresh swoln with snows
Thus threatened a poor Briar-rose,
That, all bespattered with his foam,
And dancing high and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home.

II

"Dost thou presume my course to block?
Off, off! or, puny Thing!
I'll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling."
The Flood was tyrannous and strong;
The patient Briar suffered long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be past;
But, seeing no relief, at last,
He ventured to reply.

III

"Ah!" said the Briar, "blame me not;
Why should we dwell in strife?
We who in this sequestered spot
Once lived a happy life!
You stirred me on my rocky bed—
What pleasure through my veins you spread
The summer long, from day to day,
My leaves you freshened and bedewed;
Nor was it common gratitude
That did your cares repay.

IV

"When spring came on with bud and bell,
Among these rocks did I
Before you hang my wreaths to tell
That gentle days were nigh!
And in the sultry summer hours,
I sheltered you with leaves and flowers;
And in my leaves—now shed and gone,
The linnet lodged, and for us two
Chanted his pretty songs, when you
Had little voice or none.

V

"But now proud thoughts are in your breast—
What grief is mine you see,
Ah! would you think, even yet how blest
Together we might be!
Though of both leaf and flower bereft,
Some ornaments to me are left—
Rich store of scarlet hips is mine,
With which I, in my humble way,
Would deck you many a winter day,
A happy Eglantine!"

VI

What more he said I cannot tell,
The Torrent down the rocky dell
Came thundering loud and fast;
I listened, nor aught else could hear;
The Briar quaked—and much I fear
Those accents were his last. 1800.

THE OAK AND THE BROOM

A PASTORAL

Suggested upon the mountain pathway that leads from Upper Rydal to Grasmere. The ponderous block of stone which is mentioned in the poem remains, I believe, to this day, a good way up Nab-Scar. Broom grows under it, and in many places on the side of the precipice.

I

HIS simple truths did Andrew glean
Beside the babbling rills;
A careful student he had been
Among the woods and hills.
One winter's night, when through the trees
The wind was roaring, on his knees
His youngest born did Andrew hold:
And while the rest, a ruddy quire,
Were seated round their blazing fire,
This Tale the Shepherd told.

II

"I saw a crag, a lofty stone
As ever tempest beat!
Out of its head an Oak had grown,
A Broom out of its feet.
The time was March, a cheerful noon—
The thaw-wind, with the breath of June,
Breathed gently from the warm south-west
When, in a voice sedate with age,
This Oak, a giant and a sage,
His neighbour thus addressed:—

III

"'Eight weary weeks, through rock and clay,
Along this mountain's edge,
The Frost hath wrought both night and day,
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up! and think, above your head
What trouble, surely, will be bred;
Last night I heard a crash—'tis true,
The splinters took another road—
I see them yonder—what a load
For such a Thing as you!

IV

"'You are preparing as before,
To deck your slender shape;
And yet, just three years back--no more—
You had a strange escape:
Down from yon cliff a fragment broke;
It thundered down, with fire and smoke,
And hitherward pursued its way;
This ponderous block was caught by me,
And o'er your head, as you may see,
'Tis hanging to this day!

V

"'If breeze or bird to this rough steep
Your kind's first seed did bear;
The breeze had better been asleep,
The bird caught in a snare:
For you and your green twigs decoy
The little witless shepherd-boy
To come and slumber in your bower;
And, trust me, on some sultry noon,
Both you and he, Heaven knows how soon!
Will perish in one hour.

VI

"'From me this friendly warning take'—
The Broom began to doze,
And thus, to keep herself awake,
Did gently interpose:
'My thanks for your discourse are due;
That more than what you say is true,
I know, and I have known it long;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, whether young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

VII

"'Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man,
Who is not wise at all.
For me, why should I wish to roam?
This spot is my paternal home,
It is my pleasant heritage;
My father many a happy year,
Spread here his careless blossoms, here
Attained a good old age.

VIII

"'Even such as his may be my lot.
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors? Am I not
In truth a favoured plant!
On me such bounty Summer pours,
That I am covered o'er with flowers;
And, when the Frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That you might look at me and say,
This Plant can never die.

IX

"'The butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade, the mother-ewe
Lies with her infant lamb; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy which they partake,
It is a joy to me.'

X

"Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
The Broom might have pursued
Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renewed;
But in the branches of the oak
Two ravens now began to croak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling bees
To rest, or murmur there.

XI

"One night, my Children! from the north
There came a furious blast;
At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the cliff I passed.
The storm had fallen upon the Oak,
And struck him with a mighty stroke,

And whirled, and whirled him far away;
And, in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day." 1800.

HART-LEAP WELL

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The first eight stanzas were composed extempore one winter evening in the cottage; when, after having tired myself with labouring at an awkward passage in "The Brothers," I started with a sudden impulse to this to get rid of the other, and finished it in a day or two. My Sister and I had past the place a few weeks before in our wild winter journey from Sockburn on the banks of the Tees to Grasmere. A peasant whom we met near the spot told us the story so far as concerned the name of the Well, and the Hart, and pointed out the Stones. Both the Stones and the Well are objects that may easily be missed; the tradition by this time may be extinct in the neighbourhood: the man who related it to us was very old.

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable Chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

The Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud,
And now, as he approached a vassal's door,
"Bring forth another horse!" he cried aloud.

"Another horse!"—That shout the vassal heard
And saddled his best Steed, a comely grey;
Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar;
But horse and man are vanished, one and all;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain:
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The Knight hallooed, he cheered and chid them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern;
But breath and eyesight fail; and, one by one,
The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown?
—This chase it looks not like an earthly chase;
Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain-side;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died;
But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a thorn;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy:
He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned;
And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretched:
His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Never had living man such joyful lot!)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
Four roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted Beast
Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by human eyes:
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

"I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbour, made for rural joy;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

"A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for that fountain in the dell!
And they who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth, shall call it HART-LEAP WELL.

"And, gallant Stag! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

"And, in the summer-time when days are long,
I will come hither with my Paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

"Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbour shall endure;—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure!"

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring.
—Soon did the Knight perform what he had said;
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the Moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter led his wondering Paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND

THE moving accident is not my trade;
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square;
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine:
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,—
The last stone-pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head;
Half wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
"Here in old time the hand of man hath been"

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,
Came up the hollow:—him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquired.

The Shepherd stopped, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
"A jolly place," said he, "in times of old!
But something ails it now: the spot is curst.

"You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower; and here a mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms!

"The arbour does its own condition tell;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream;
But as to the great Lodge! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

"There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

"Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood: but, for my part,
I've guessed, when I've been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

"What thoughts must through the creature's brain have past!
Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at this last—
O Master! it has been a cruel leap.

"For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his deathbed near the well.

"Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by the fountain in the summer-tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother's side.

"In April here beneath the flowering thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

"Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone."

"Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine:
This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

"The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

"The pleasure-house is dust:—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

"She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

"One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

1800.

"'TIS SAID, THAT SOME HAVE DIED FOR LOVE"

'Tis said, that some have died for love:
And here and there a churchyard grave is found
In the cold north's unhallowed ground,
Because the wretched man himself had slain,
His love was such a grievous pain.
And there is one whom I five years have known;
He dwells alone
Upon Helvellyn's side:
He loved—the pretty Barbara died;
And thus he makes his moan:
Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid
When thus his moan he made:

"Oh, move, thou Cottage, from behind that oak!
Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke
May mount into the sky!
The clouds pass on; they from the heavens depart.
I look—the sky is empty space;
I know not what I trace;
But when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.

"Oh! what a weight is in these shades! Ye leaves,
That murmur once so dear, when will it cease?
Your sound my heart of rest bereaves,
It robs my heart of peace.
Thou Thrush, that singest loud—and loud and free,
Into yon row of willows flit,
Upon that alder sit;
Or sing another song, or choose another tree.

"Roll back, sweet Rill! back to thy mountain-bounds,
And there for ever be thy waters chained!
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustained;
If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
Headlong yon waterfall must come,
Oh let it then be dumb!
Be anything, sweet Rill, but that which thou art now.

"Thou Eglantine, so bright with sunny showers,
Proud as a rainbow spanning half the vale,
Thou one fair shrub, oh! shed thy flowers,
And stir not in the gale.
For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
Thus rise and thus descend,—
Disturbs me till the sight is more than I can bear."

The Man who makes this feverish complaint
Is one of giant stature, who could dance
Equipped from head to foot in iron mail.
Ah gentle Love! if ever thought was thine
To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
Turn from me, gentle Love! nor let me walk
Within the sound of Emma's voice, nor know
Such happiness as I have known to-day.

1800.

THE CHILDLESS FATHER

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. When I was a child at Cockermouth, no funeral took place without a basin filled with sprigs of boxwood being placed upon a table covered with a white cloth in front of the house. The huntings on foot, in which the old man is supposed to join as here described, were of common, almost habitual, occurrence in our vales when I was a boy; and the people took much delight in them. They are now less frequent.

"Up, Timothy, up with your staff and away!
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay;
The hare has just started from Hamilton's grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds."

—Of coats and of jackets grey, scarlet, and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colours were seen;
With their comely blue aprons, and caps white as snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

Fresh sprigs of green box-wood, not six months before,
Filled the funeral basin[1] at Timothy's door;
A coffin through Timothy's threshold had past;
One Child did it bear, and that Child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray,
The horse and the horn, and the hark! hark away!
Old Timothy took up his staff, and he shut
With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said;
"The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead."
But of this in my ears not a word did he speak;
And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.
1800.

SONG

FOR THE WANDERING JEW

THOUGH the torrents from their fountains
Roar down many a craggy steep,
Yet they find among the mountains
Resting-places calm and deep.

Clouds that love through air to hasten,
Ere the storm its fury stills,
Helmet-like themselves will fasten
On the heads of towering hills.

What, if through the frozen centre
Of the Alps the Chamois bound,
Yet he has a home to enter
In some nook of chosen ground:

And the Sea-horse, though the ocean
Yield him no domestic cave,
Slumbers without sense of motion,
Couched upon the rocking wave.

If on windy days the Raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less she loves her haven
In the bosom of the cliff.

The fleet Ostrich, till day closes,
Vagrant over desert sands,
Brooding on her eggs reposes
When chill night that care demands.

Day and night my toils redouble,
Never nearer to the goal;
Night and day, I feel the trouble
Of the Wanderer in my soul.
1800.

RURAL ARCHITECTURE

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. These structures, as every one knows, are common amongst our hills, being built by shepherds, as conspicuous marks, and occasionally by boys in sport.

THERE'S George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and Reginald Shore,
Three rosy-cheeked school-boys, the highest not more
Than the height of a counsellor's bag;
To the top of GREAT HOW[1] did it please them to climb:
And there they built up, without mortar or lime,
A Man on the peak of the crag.

They built him of stones gathered up as they lay:
They built him and christened him all in one day,
An urchin both vigorous and hale;
And so without scruple they called him Ralph Jones.

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[1] In several parts of the North of England, when a funeral takes place, a basin full of sprigs of box-wood is placed at the door of the house from which the coffin is taken up, and each person who attends the funeral ordinarily takes a sprig of this box-wood, and throws it into the grave of the deceased.

[1] Great How is a single and conspicuous hill, which rises towards the foot of Thirlmere, on the western side of the beautiful dale of Legberthwaite, along the high road between Keswick and Ambleside.

Now Ralph is renowned for the length of his bones;
The Magog of Legberthwaite dale.

Just half a week after, the wind sallied forth,
And, in anger or merriment, out of the north,
Coming on with a terrible pother,
From the peak of the crag blew the giant away.
And what did these school-boys?—The very next day
They went and they built up another.

—Some little I've seen of blind boisterous works
By Christian disturbers more savage than Turks,
Spirits busy to do and undo:
At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes will flag;
Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the crag!
And I'll build up a giant with you.

1800.

ELLEN IRWIN:

OR,

THE BRAES OF KIRTLE[1]

It may be worth while to observe that as there are Scotch Poems on this subject in simple ballad strain, I thought it would be both presumptuous and superfluous to attempt treating it in the same way; and, accordingly, I chose a construction of stanza quite new in our language; in fact, the same as that of Bürgher's *Leonora*, except that the first and third lines do not, in my stanzas, rhyme. At the outset I threw out a classical image to prepare the reader for the style in which I meant to treat the story, and so to preclude all comparison.

FAIR Ellen Irwin, when she sate
Upon the braes of Kirtle,
Was lovely as a Grecian maid
Adorned with wreaths of myrtle;
Young Adam Bruce beside her lay,
And there did they beguile the day
With love and gentle speeches,
Beneath the budding beeches.

From many knights and many squires
The Bruce had been selected;
And Gordon, fairest of them all,
By Ellen was rejected.
Sad tidings to that noble Youth!
For it may be proclaimed with truth,
If Bruce hath lovèd sincerely,
That Gordon loves as dearly.

But what are Gordon's form and face,
His shattered hopes and crosses,
To them, 'mid Kirtle's pleasant braes,
Reclined on flowers and mosses?
Alas that ever he was born!
The Gordon, couched behind a thorn,
Sees them and their caressing;
Beholds them blest and blessing.

Proud Gordon, maddened by the thoughts
That through his brain are travelling,
Rushed forth, and at the heart of Bruce
He launched a deadly javelin!
Fair Ellen saw it as it came,
And, starting up to meet the same,
Did with her body cover
The Youth, her chosen lover.

And, falling into Bruce's arms,
Thus died the beauteous Ellen,
Thus, from the heart of her True-love,
The mortal spear repelling.
And Bruce, as soon as he had slain
The Gordon, sailed away to Spain;
And fought with rage incessant
Against the Moorish crescent.

But many days, and many months,
And many years ensuing,
This wretched Knight did vainly seek
The death that he was wooing.
So, coming his last help to crave,
Heart-broken, upon Ellen's grave
His body he extended,
And there his sorrow ended.

Now ye, who willingly have heard
The tale I have been telling,
May in Kirkconnel churchyard view
The grave of lovely Ellen:
By Ellen's side the Bruce is laid;
And, for the stone upon his head,
May no rude hand deface it,
And its forlorn Hic jacet!

1800.

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[1] The Kirtle is a river in the southern part of Scotland, on the banks of which the events here related took place.

ANDREW JONES

I HATE that Andrew Jones; he'll breed
His children up to waste and pillage.
I wish the press-gang or the drum
With its tantara sound would come,
And sweep him from the village!

I said not this, because he loves
Through the long day to swear and tipple;
But for the poor dear sake of one
To whom a foul deed he had done,
A friendless man, a travelling cripple!

For this poor crawling helpless wretch,
Some horseman who was passing by,
A penny on the ground had thrown;
But the poor cripple was alone
And could not stoop—no help was nigh.

Inch-thick the dust lay on the ground
For it had long been droughty weather;
So with his staff the cripple wrought
Among the dust till he had brought
The half-pennies together.

It chanced that Andrew passed that way
Just at the time; and there he found
The cripple in the mid-day heat
Standing alone, and at his feet
He saw the penny on the ground.

He stopped and took the penny up:
And when the cripple nearer drew,
Quoth Andrew, "Under half-a-crown,
What a man finds is all his own,
And so, my Friend, good-day to you."

And *hence* I said, that Andrew's boys
Will all be trained to waste and pillage,
And wished the press-gang, or the drum
With its tantara sound, would come
And sweep him from the village.

1800.

THE TWO THIEVES;

OR, THE LAST STAGE OF AVARICE.

This is described from the life, as I was in the habit of observing when a boy at Hawkshead School. Daniel was more than eighty years older than myself when he was daily, thus occupied, under my notice. No book could have so early taught me to think of the changes to which human life is subject; and while looking at him I could not but say to myself—we may, one of us, I or the happiest of my playmates, live to become still more the object of pity than this old man, this half-doating pilferer!

O NOW that the genius of Bewick were mine,
And the skill which he learned on the banks of the Tyne.
Then the Muses might deal with me just as they chose,
For I'd take my last leave both of verse and of prose.

What feats would I work with my magical hand!
Book-learning and books should be banished the land:
And, for hunger and thirst and such troublesome calls,
Every ale-house should then have a feast on its walls.

The traveller would hang his wet clothes on a chair;
Let them smoke, let them burn, not a straw would he care!
For the Prodigal Son, Joseph's Dream and his sheaves,
Oh, what would they be to my tale of two Thieves?

The One, yet unbreeched, is not three birthdays old,
His Grandsire that age more than thirty times told;
There are ninety good seasons of fair and foul weather
Between them, and both go a-pilfering together.

With chips is the carpenter strewing his floor?
Is a cart-load of turf at an old woman's door?
Old Daniel his hand to the treasure will slide!
And his Grandson's as busy at work by his side.

Old Daniel begins; he stops short—and his eye,
Through the lost look of dotage, is cunning and sly:

'Tis a look which at this time is hardly his
own,
But tells a plain tale of the days that are
flown.

He once had a heart which was moved by
the wires
Of manifold pleasures and many desires:
And what if he cherished his purse? 'Twas
no more
Than treading a path trod by thousands
before.

'Twas a path trod by thousands; but
Daniel is one
Who went something farther than others
have gone,
And now with old Daniel you see how it
fares;
You see to what end he has brought his
grey hairs.

The pair sally forth hand in hand: ere the
sun
Has peered o'er the beeches, their work is
begun:
And yet, into whatever sin they may fall,
This child but half knows it, and that, not
at all.

They hunt through the streets with deliberate
tread,
And each, in his turn, becomes leader or led;
And, wherever they carry their plots and
their wiles,
Every face in the village is dimpled with
smiles.

Neither checked by the rich nor the needy
they roam;
For the grey-headed Sire has a daughter
at home,
Who will gladly repair all the damage that's
done;
And three, were it asked, would be rendered
for one.

Old Man! whom so oft I with pity have
eyed,
I love thee, and love the sweet Boy at thy
side:
Long yet may'st thou live! for a teacher
we see
That lifts up the veil of our nature in thee.
1800.

A CHARACTER

The principal features are taken from that of my friend Robert Jones.

I MARVEL how Nature could ever find space
For so many strange contrasts in one human
face:
There's thought and no thought, and there's
paleness and bloom
And bustle and sluggishness, pleasure and
gloom.

There's weakness, and strength both redundant
and vain;
Such strength as, if ever affliction and pain
Could pierce through a temper that's soft to
disease,
Would be rational peace—a philosopher's
ease.

There's indifference, alike when he fails or
succeeds,
And attention full ten times as much as
there needs;
Pride where there's no envy, there's so much
of joy;
And mildness, and spirit both forward and
coy.

There's freedom, and sometimes a diffident
stare
Of shame scarcely seeming to know that
she's there,
There's virtue, the title it surely may claim,
Yet wants heaven knows what to be worthy
the name.

This picture from nature may seem to
depart,
Yet the Man would at once run away with
your heart;
And I for five centuries right gladly would be
Such an odd such a kind happy creature
as he. 1800.

INSCRIPTIONS

FOR THE SPOT WHERE THE HERMITAGE STOOD ON ST. HERBERT'S ISLAND, DERWENTWATER.

IF thou in the dear love of some one Friend
Hast been so happy that thou know'st what
thoughts

Will sometimes in the happiness of love
Make the heart sink, then wilt thou reverence
This quiet spot; and, Stranger! not unmoved
Wilt thou behold this shapeless heap of stones,
The desolate ruins of St. Herbert's Cell.
Here stood his threshold; here was spread the roof
That sheltered him, a self-secluded Man,
After long exercise in social cares
And offices humane, intent to adore
The Deity, with undistracted mind,
And meditate on everlasting things,
In utter solitude.—But he had left
A Fellow-labourer, whom the good Man loved
As his own soul. And, when with eye upraised
To heaven he knelt before the crucifix,
While o'er the lake the cataract of Lodore
Pealed to his orisons, and when he paced
Along the beach of this small isle and thought
Of his Companion, he would pray that both
(Now that their earthly duties were fulfilled)
Might die in the same moment. Nor in vain
So prayed he:—as our chronicles report,
Though here the Hermit numbered his last day
Far from St. Cuthbert his belovèd Friend,
Those holy Men both died in the same hour. 1800.

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL UPON A STONE IN THE WALL OF THE HOUSE (AN OUT-HOUSE), ON THE ISLAND AT GRASMERE.

RUDE is this Edifice, and Thou hast seen
Buildings, albeit rude, that have maintained
Proportions more harmonious, and approached
To closer fellowship with ideal grace.
But take it in good part:—alas! the poor
Vitruvius of our village had no help
From the great City; never, upon leaves
Of red Morocco folio, saw displayed,
In long succession, pre-existing ghosts
Of Beauties yet unborn—the rustic Lodge
Antique, and Cottage with verandah graced,
Nor lacking, for fit company, alcove,
Green-house, shell-grot, and moss-lined hermitage.
Thou see'st a homely Pile, yet to these walls
The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and here
The new-dropped lamb finds shelter from the wind.
And hither does one Poet sometimes row
His pinnace, a small vagrant barge, up-piled
With plenteous store of heath and withered fern,
(A lading which he with his sickle cuts,
Among the mountains) and beneath this roof
He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unshorn, the Sheep,
Panting beneath the burthen of their wool,
Lie round him, even as if they were a part
Of his own Household: nor, while from his bed
He looks, through the open door-place, toward the lake
And to the stirring breezes, does he want
Creations lovely as the work of sleep—
Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy!
1800.

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL UPON A STONE, THE LARGEST OF A HEAP LYING NEAR A DESERTED QUARRY, UPON ONE OF THE ISLANDS AT RYDAL.

STRANGER! this hillock of mis-shapen stones
Is not a Ruin spared or made by time,
Nor, as perchance thou rashly deem'st, the Cairn
Of some old British Chief: 'tis nothing more
Than the rude embryo of a little Dome
Or Pleasure-house, once destined to be built
Among the birch-trees of this rocky isle.
But, as it chanced, Sir William having learned
That from the shore a full-grown man might wade,
And make himself a freeman of this spot
At any hour he chose, the prudent Knight

Desisted, and the quarry and the mound
Are monuments of his unfinished task.
The block on which these lines are traced, perhaps,
Was once selected as the corner-stone
Of that intended Pile, which would have been
Some quaint odd plaything of elaborate skill,
So that, I guess, the linnet and the thrush,
And other little builders who dwell here,
Had wondered at the work. But blame him not,
For old Sir William was a gentle Knight,
Bred in this vale, to which he appertained
With all his ancestry. Then peace to him,
And for the outrage which he had devised
Entire forgiveness!—But if thou art one
On fire with thy impatience to become
An inmate of these mountains,—if, disturbed
By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn
Out of the quiet rock the elements
Of thy trim Mansion destined soon to blaze
In snow-white splendour,—think again; and, taught
By old Sir William and his quarry, leave
Thy fragments to the bramble and the rose;
There let the vernal slow-worm sun himself,
And let the redbreast hop from stone to stone. 1800.

THE SPARROW'S NEST

Written in the Orchard, Town-end, Grasmere. At the end of the garden of my father's house at Cockermouth was a high terrace that commanded a fine view of the river Derwent and Cockermouth Castle. This was our favourite play-ground. The terrace-wall, a low one, was covered with closely-clipt privet and roses, which gave an almost impervious shelter to birds that built their nests there. The latter of these stanzas alludes to one of those nests.

Behold, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started—seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;
Dreading, tho' wishing, to be near it:
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy.
1801.

"PELION AND OSSA FLOURISH SIDE BY SIDE"

Pelion and Ossa flourish side by side,
Together in immortal books enrolled:
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold;
And that inspiring Hill, which "did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,"
Shines with poetic radiance as of old;
While not an English Mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds:
What was the great Parnassus' self to Thee,
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
Our British Hill is nobler far; he shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly. 1801.

THE PRIORESS'S TALE

FROM CHAUCER

"Call up him who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold."

In the following Poem no further deviation from the original has been made than was necessary for the fluent reading and instant understanding of the Author: so much, however, is the language altered since Chaucer's time, especially in pronunciation, that much was to be removed, and its place supplied with as little incongruity as possible. The ancient accent has been retained in a few conjunctions, as *alsò* and *alwày*, from a conviction that such sprinklings of antiquity would be admitted, by persons of taste, to have a graceful accordance with the subject. The fierce bigotry of the Prioress forms a fine back-ground for her tender-hearted sympathies with the Mother and Child; and the mode in which the story is told amply atones for the extravagance of the miracle.

I

"O LORD, our Lord! how wondrously," (quoth she)
"Thy name in this large world is spread abroad!
For not alone by men of dignity
Thy worship is performed and precious laud;
But by the mouths of children, gracious God!
Thy goodness is set forth; they when they lie
Upon the breast thy name do glorify.

II

"Wherefore in praise, the worthiest that I may,
Jesu! of thee, and the white Lily-flower
Which did thee bear, and is a Maid for aye,
To tell a story I will use my power;
Not that I may incrèase her honour's dower,
For she herself is honour, and the root
Of goodness, next her Son, our soul's best boot.

III

"O Mother Maid! O Maid and Mother free!
O bush unburnt! burning in Moses' sight!
That down didst ravish from the Deity,
Through humbleness, the spirit that did alight
Upon thy heart, whence, through that glory's might,
Conceivèd was the Father's sapience,
Help me to tell it in thy reverence!

IV

"Lady! thy goodness, thy magnificence,
Thy virtue, and thy great humility,
Surpass all science and all utterance;
For sometimes, Lady! ere men pray to thee
Thou goest before in thy benignity,
The light to us vouchsafing of thy prayer,
To be our guide unto thy Son so dear.

V

"My knowledge is so weak, O blissful Queen!
To tell abroad thy mighty worthiness,
That I the weight of it may not sustain;
But as a child of twelvemonths old or less,
That laboureth his language to express,
Even so fare I; and therefore, I thee pray,
Guide thou my song which I of thee shall say.

VI

"There was in Asia, in a mighty town,
'Mong Christian folk, a street where Jews might be,
Assigned to them and given them for their own
By a great Lord, for gain and usury,
Hateful to Christ and to his company;
And through this street who list might ride and wend;
Free was it, and unbarred at either end.

VII

"A little school of Christian people stood
Down at the farther end, in which there were
A nest of children come of Christian blood,
That learnèd in that school from year to year
Such sort of doctrine as men usèd there,
That is to say, to sing and read alsò,
As little children in their childhood do.

VIII

"Among these children was a Widow's son,
A little scholar, scarcely seven years old,
Who day by day unto this school hath gone,
And eke, when he the image did behold
Of Jesu's Mother, as he had been told,
This Child was wont to kneel adown and say
Ave Marie, as he goeth by the way.

IX

"This Widow thus her little Son hath taught
Our blissful Lady, Jesu's Mother dear,
To worship aye, and he forgat it not;
For simple infant hath a ready ear.
Sweet is the holiness of youth: and hence,
Calling to mind this matter when I may,
Saint Nicholas in my presence standeth aye,
For he so young to Christ did reverence.

X

"This little Child, while in the school he sate
His Primer conning with an earnest cheer,
The whilst the rest their anthem-book repeat
The *Alma Redemptoris* did he hear;
And as he durst he drew him near and near,
And hearkened to the words and to the note,
Till the first verse he learned it all by rote.

XI

"This Latin knew he nothing what it said,
For he too tender was of age to know;
But to his comrade he repaired, and prayed
That he the meaning of this song would show,
And unto him declare why men sing so;
This oftentimes, that he might be at ease,
This child did him beseech on his bare knees.

XII

"His Schoolfellow, who elder was than he,
Answered him thus:—'This song, I have heard say,
Was fashioned for our blissful Lady free;
Her to salute, and also her to pray
To be our help upon our dying day:
If there is more in this, I know it not;
Song do I learn,—small grammar I have got.'

XIII

"'And is this song fashioned in reverence
Of Jesu's Mother?' said this Innocent;
'Now, certès, I will use my diligence
To con it all ere Christmas-tide be spent;
Although I for my Primer shall be shent,
And shall be beaten three times in an hour,
Our Lady I will praise with all my power.'

XIV

"His Schoolfellow, whom he had so besought,
As they went homeward taught him privily
And then he sang it well and fearlessly,
From word to word according to the note:
Twice in a day it passèd through his throat;
Homeward and schoolward whensoe'er he went,
On Jesu's Mother fixed was his intent.

XV

"Through all the Jewry (this before said I)
This little Child, as he came to and fro,
Full merrily then would he sing and cry,
O *Alma Redemptoris!* high and low:
The sweetness of Christ's Mother piercèd so
His heart, that her to praise, to her to pray,
He cannot stop his singing by the way.

XVI

"The Serpent, Satan, our first foe, that hath
His wasp's nest in Jew's heart, upswelled—'O woe,
O Hebrew people!' said he in his wrath,
'Is it an honest thing? Shall this be so?
That such a Boy where'er he lists shall go
In your despite, and sing his hymns and saws,
Which is against the reverence of our laws!'

XVII

"From that day forward have the Jews conspired
Out of the world this Innocent to chase;
And to this end a Homicide they hired,
That in an alley had a privy place,
And, as the Child 'gan to the school to pace,
This cruel Jew him seized, and held him fast
And cut his throat, and in a pit him cast.

XVIII

"I say that him into a pit they threw,
A loathsome pit, whence noisome scents exhale;
O cursèd folk! away, ye Herods new!
What may your ill intentions you avail?
Murder will out; certès it will not fail,
Know, that the honour of high God may spread,
The blood cries out on your accursèd deed.

XIX

"O Martyr 'stablished in virginity!
Now may'st thou sing for aye before the throne,
Following the Lamb celestial," quoth she,
"Of which the great Evangelist, Saint John,
In Patmos wrote, who saith of them that go
Before the Lamb singing continually,
That never fleshly woman they did know.

XX

"Now this poor widow waiteth all that night
After her little Child, and he came not;
For which, by earliest glimpse of morning light,
With face all pale with dread and busy thought,
She at the School and elsewhere him hath sought
Until thus far she learned, that he had been
In the Jews' street, and there he last was seen.

XXI

"With Mother's pity in her breast enclosed
She goeth, as she were half out of her mind,
To every place wherein she hath supposed
By likelihood her little Son to find;
And ever on Christ's Mother meek and kind
She cried, till to the Jewry she was brought,
And him among the accursèd Jews she sought.

XXII

"She asketh, and she piteously doth pray
To every Jew that dwelleth in that place
To tell her if her child had passed that way;
They all said—Nay; but Jesu of his grace
Gave to her thought, that in a little space
She for her Son in that same spot did cry
Where he was cast into a pit hard by.

XXIII

"O thou great God that dost perform thy laud
By mouths of Innocents, lo! here thy might;
This gem of chastity, this emerald,
And eke of martyrdom this ruby bright,
There, where with mangled throat he lay upright,
The *Alma Redemptoris* 'gan to sing,
So loud, that with his voice the place did ring.

XXIV

"The Christian folk that through the Jewry went
Come to the spot in wonder at the thing;
And hastily they for the Provost sent;
Immediately he came, not tarrying,
And praiseth Christ that is our heavenly King,
And eke his Mother, honour of Mankind:
Which done he bade that they the Jews should bind.

XXV

"This Child with piteous lamentation then
Was taken up, singing his song alwày;
And with procession great and pomp of men
To the next Abbey him they bare away;
His Mother swooning by the body lay:
And scarcely could the people that were near
Remove this second Rachel from the bier.

XXVI

"Torment and shameful death to every one
This Provost doth for those bad Jews prepare
That of this murder wist, and that anon:
Such wickedness his judgments cannot spare;
Who will do evil, evil shall he bear;
Them therefore with wild horses did he draw,
And after that he hung them by the law.

XXVII

"Upon his bier this Innocent doth lie
Before the altar while the Mass doth last:
The Abbot with his convent's company
Then sped themselves to bury him full fast;
And, when they holy water on him cast,
Yet spake this Child when sprinkled was the water,
And sang, O *Alma Redemptoris Mater!*

XXVIII

"This Abbot, for he was a holy man,
As all Monks are, or surely ought to be,
In supplication to the Child began
Thus saying, 'O dear Child! I summon thee
In virtue of the holy Trinity
Tell me the cause why thou dost sing this hymn
Since that thy throat is cut, as it doth seem.'

XXIX

"'My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,'
Said this young Child, 'and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea many hours ago;
But Jesus Christ, as in the books ye find,
Will that his glory last, and be in mind;
And, for the worship of his Mother dear,
Yet may I sing O *Alma!* loud and clear.

XXX

"'This well of mercy, Jesu's Mother sweet,
After my knowledge I have loved alway;
And in the hour when I my death did meet
To me she came, and thus to me did say,
'Thou in thy dying sing this holy lay,'
As ye have heard; and soon as I had sung
Methought she laid a grain upon my tongue.

XXXI

"'Wherefore I sing, nor can from song refrain,
In honour of that blissful Maiden free,
Till from my tongue off-taken is the grain;
And after that thus said she unto me;
'My little Child, then will I come for thee
Soon as the grain from off thy tongue they take:
Be not dismayed, I will not thee forsake!''

XXXII

"This holy Monk, this Abbot—him mean I,
Touched then his tongue, and took away the grain;
And he gave up the ghost full peacefully;
And, when the Abbot had this wonder seen,
His salt tears trickled down like showers of rain;
And on his face he dropped upon the ground,
And still he lay as if he had been bound.

XXXIII

"Eke the whole Convent on the pavement lay,
Weeping and praising Jesu's Mother dear;
And after that they rose, and took their way,
And lifted up this Martyr from the bier,
And in a tomb of precious marble clear
Enclosed his uncorrupted body sweet.—
Where'er he be, God grant us him to meet!

XXXIV

"Young Hew of Lincoln! in like sort laid low
By cursèd Jews—thing well and widely known,
For it was done a little while ago—
Pray also thou for us, while here we tarry
Weak sinful folk, that God, with pitying eye,
In mercy would his mercy multiply
On us, for reverence of his Mother Mary!"
1801.

THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE

FROM CHAUCER

I

THE God of Love—*ah, benedicite!*
How mighty and how great a Lord is he!
For he of low hearts can make high, of high
He can make low, and unto death bring nigh;
And hard hearts he can make them kind and free.

II

Within a little time, as hath been found,
He can make sick folk whole and fresh and sound:
Them who are whole in body and in mind,
He can make sick,—bind can he and unbind
All that he will have bound, or have unbound.

III

To tell his might my wit may not suffice;
Foolish men he can make them out of wise;—
For he may do all that he will devise;
Loose livers he can make abate their vice,
And proud hearts can make tremble in a trice.

IV

In brief, the whole of what he will, he may;
Against him dare not any wight say nay;
To humble or afflict whome'er he will,
To gladden or to grieve, he hath like skill;
But most his might he sheds on the eve of May.

V

For every true heart, gentle heart and free,
That with him is, or thinketh so to be,
Now against May shall have some stirring—whether
To joy, or be it to some mourning; never
At other time, methinks, in like degree.

VI

For now when they may hear the small birds' song,
And see the budding leaves the branches throng,

This unto their remembrance doth bring
All kinds of pleasure mixed with sorrowing;
And longing of sweet thoughts that ever long.

VII

And of that longing heaviness doth come,
Whence oft great sickness grows of heart and home:
Sick are they all for lack of their desire;
And thus in May their hearts are set on fire,
So that they burn forth in great martyrdom.

VIII

In sooth, I speak from feeling, what though now
Old am I, and to genial pleasure slow;
Yet have I felt of sickness through the May,
Both hot and cold, and heart-aches every day,—
How hard, alas! to bear, I only know.

IX

Such shaking doth the fever in me keep
Through all this May that I have little sleep;
And also 'tis not likely unto me,
That any living heart should sleepy be
In which Love's dart its fiery point doth steep.

X

But tossing lately on a sleepless bed,
I of a token thought which Lovers heed;
How among them it was a common tale,
That it was good to hear the Nightingale,
Ere the vile Cuckoo's note be utterèd.

XI

And then I thought anon as it was day,
I gladly would go somewhere to essay
If I perchance a Nightingale might hear,
For yet had I heard none, of all that year,
And it was then the third night of the May.

XII

And soon as I a glimpse of day espied,
No longer would I in my bed abide,
But straightway to a wood that was hard by,
Forth did I go, alone and fearlessly,
And held the pathway down by a brook-side;

XIII

Till to a lawn I came all white and green,
I in so fair a one had never been.
The ground was green, with daisy powdered over;
Tall were the flowers, the grove a lofty cover,
All green and white; and nothing else was seen.

XIV

There sate I down among the fair fresh flowers,
And saw the birds come tripping from their bowers,
Where they had rested them all night; and they,
Who were so joyful at the light of day,
Began to honour May with all their powers.

XV

Well did they know that service all by rote,
And there was many and many a lovely note,
Some, singing loud, as if they had complained;
Some with their notes another manner feigned;
And some did sing all out with the full throat.

XVI

They pruned themselves, and made themselves right gay,
Dancing and leaping light upon the spray;
And ever two and two together were,
The same as they had chosen for the year,
Upon Saint Valentine's returning day.

XVII

Meanwhile the stream, whose bank I sate upon,
Was making such a noise as it ran on
Accordant to the sweet Birds' harmony;
Methought that it was the best melody
Which ever to man's ear a passage won.

XVIII

And for delight, but how I never wot,
I in a slumber and a swoon was caught,
Not all asleep and yet not waking wholly;
And as I lay, the Cuckoo, bird unholy,
Broke silence, or I heard him in my thought.

XIX

And that was right upon a tree fast by,
And who was then ill satisfied but I?
Now, God, quoth I, that died upon the rood,
From thee and thy base throat, keep all that's good,
Full little joy have I now of thy cry.

XX

And, as I with the Cuckoo thus 'gan chide,
In the next bush that was me fast beside,
I heard the lusty Nightingale so sing,
That her clear voice made a loud rioting,
Echoing thorough all the green wood wide.

XXI

Ah! good sweet Nightingale! for my heart's cheer,
Hence hast thou stayed a little while too long;
For we have had the sorry Cuckoo here,
And she hath been before thee with her song;
Evil light on her! she hath done me wrong.

XXII

But hear you now a wondrous thing, I pray;
As long as in that swooning-fit I lay,
Methought I wist right well what these birds meant,
And had good knowing both of their intent,
And of their speech, and all that they would say.

XXIII

The Nightingale thus in my hearing spake:—
Good Cuckoo, seek some other bush or brake,
And, prithee, let us that can sing dwell here;
For every wight eschews thy song to hear,
Such uncouth singing verily dost thou make.

XXIV

What! quoth she then, what is't that ails thee now?
It seems to me I sing as well as thou;
For mine's a song that is both true and plain,—
Although I cannot quaver so in vain
As thou dost in thy throat, I wot not how.

XXV

All men may understanding have of me,
But, Nightingale, so may they not of thee;
For thou hast many a foolish and quaint cry:—
Thou say'st OSEE, OSEE, then how may I
Have knowledge, I thee pray, what this may be?

XXVI

Ah, fool! quoth she, wist thou not what it is?
Oft as I say OSEE, OSEE, I wis,
Then mean I, that I should be wonderous fain
That shamefully they one and all were slain,
Whoever against Love mean aught amiss.

XXVII

And also would I that they all were dead,
Who do not think in love their life to lead
For who is loth the God of Love to obey,
Is only fit to die, I dare well say,
And for that cause OSEE I cry; take heed!

XXVIII

Ay, quoth the Cuckoo, that is a quaint law,
That all must love or die; but I withdraw,
And take my leave of all such company,
For mine intent it neither is to die,
Nor ever while I live Love's yoke to draw.

XXIX

For lovers of all folk that be alive,
The most disquiet have and least do thrive;
Most feeling have of sorrow woe and care,
And the least welfare cometh to their share;
What need is there against the truth to strive?

XXX

What! quoth she, thou art all out of thy mind,
That in thy churlishness a cause canst find
To speak of Love's true Servants in this mood;
For in this world no service is so good
To every wight that gentle is of kind.

XXXI

For thereof comes all goodness and all worth;
All gentiless and honour thence come forth;

Thence worship comes, content and true heart's pleasure,
And full-assurèd trust, joy without measure,
And jollity, fresh cheerfulness, and mirth;

XXXII

And bounty, lowliness, and courtesy,
And seemliness, and faithful company,
And dread of shame that will not do amiss;
For he that faithfully Love's servant is,
Rather than be disgraced, would chuse to die.

XXXIII

And that the very truth it is which I
Now say—in such belief I'll live and die;
And Cuckoo, do thou so, by my advice.
Then, quoth she, let me never hope for bliss,
If with that counsel I do e'er comply.

XXXIV

Good Nightingale! thou speakest wondrous fair,
Yet for all that, the truth is found elsewhere;
For Love in young folk is but rage, I wis:
And Love in old folk a great dotage is;
Who most it useth, him 'twill most impair.

XXXV

For thereof come all contraries to gladness!
Thence sickness comes, and overwhelming sadness,
Mistrust and jealousy, despite, debate,
Dishonour, shame, envy importunate,
Pride, anger, mischief, poverty, and madness.

XXXVI

Loving is aye an office of despair,
And one thing is therein which is not fair;
For whoso gets of love a little bliss,
Unless it alway stay with him, I wis
He may full soon go with an old man's hair.

XXXVII

And, therefore, Nightingale! do thou keep nigh,
For trust me well, in spite of thy quaint cry,
If long time from thy mate thou be, or far,
Thou'lt be as others that forsaken are;
Then shalt thou raise a clamour as do I.

XXXVIII

Fie, quoth she, on thy name, Bird ill beseen!
The God of Love afflict thee with all teen,
For thou art worse than mad a thousand fold;
For many a one hath virtues manifold,
Who had been nought, if Love had never been.

XXXIX

For evermore his servants Love amendeth,
And he from every blemish them defendeth;
And maketh them to burn, as in a fire,
In loyalty, and worshipful desire,
And, when it likes him, joy enough them sendeth.

XL

Thou Nightingale! the Cuckoo said, be still,
For Love no reason hath but his own will;—
For to th' untrue he oft gives ease and joy;
True lovers doth so bitterly annoy,
He lets them perish through that grievous ill.

XLI

With such a master would I never be;[1]
For he, in sooth, is blind, and may not see,
And knows not when he hurts and when he heals;
Within this court full seldom Truth avails,
So diverse in his wilfulness is he.

XLII

Then of the Nightingale did I take note,
How from her inmost heart a sigh she brought,
And said, Alas! that ever I was born,
Not one word have I now, I am so forlorn,—
And with that word, she into tears burst out.

XLIII

Alas, alas! my very heart will break,
Quoth she, to hear this churlish bird thus speak
Of Love, and of his holy services;
Now, God of Love; thou help me in some wise,
That vengeance on this Cuckoo I may wreak.

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[1] From a manuscript in the Bodleian, as are also stanzas 44 and 45, which are necessary to complete the sense.

XLIV

And so methought I started up anon,
And to the brook I ran and got a stone,
Which at the Cuckoo hardily I cast,
And he for dread did fly away full fast;
And glad, in sooth, was I when he was gone.

XLV

And as he flew, the Cuckoo, ever and aye,
Kept crying "Farewell!—farewell, Popinjay!"
As if in scornful mockery of me;
And on I hunted him from tree to tree,
Till he was far, all out of sight, away.

XLVI

Then straightway came the Nightingale to me,
And said, Forsooth, my friend, do I thank thee,
That thou wert near to rescue me; and now,
Unto the God of Love I make a vow,
That all this May I will thy songstress be.

XLVII

Well satisfied, I thanked her, and she said,
By this mishap no longer be dismayed,
Though thou the Cuckoo heard, ere thou heard'st me;
Yet if I live it shall amended be,
When next May comes, if I am not afraid.

XLVIII

And one thing will I counsel thee also,
The Cuckoo trust not thou, nor his Love's saw;
All that she said is an outrageous lie.
Nay, nothing shall me bring thereto, quoth I,
For Love, and it hath done me mighty woe.

XLIX

Yea, hath it? use, quoth she, this medicine;
This May-time, every day before thou dine,
Go look on the fresh daisy; then say I,
Although for pain thou may'st be like to die,
Thou wilt be eased, and less wilt droop and pine.

L

And mind always that thou be good and true,
And I will sing one song, of many new,
For love of thee, as loud as I may cry;
And then did she begin this song full high,
"Beshrew all them that are in love untrue."

LI

And soon as she had sung it to the end,
Now farewell, quoth she, for I hence mus wend;
And, God of Love, that can right well and may,
Send unto thee as mickle joy this day,
As ever he to Lover yet did send.

LII

Thus takes the Nightingale her leave of me;
I pray to God with her always to be,
And joy of love to send her evermore;
And shield us from the Cuckoo and her lore,
For there is not so false a bird as she.

LIII

Forth then she flew, the gentle Nightingale,
To all the Birds that lodged within that dale,
And gathered each and all into one place;
And them besought to hear her doleful case
And thus it was that she began her tale.

LIV

The Cuckoo—'tis not well that I should hide
How she and I did each the other chide,
And without ceasing, since it was daylight;
And now I pray you all to do me right
Of that false Bird whom Love can not abide.

LV

Then spake one Bird, and full assent all gave;
This matter asketh counsel good as grave,
For birds we are—all here together brought;
And, in good sooth, the Cuckoo here is not;
And therefore we a Parliament will have.

LVI

And thereat shall the Eagle be our Lord,
And other Peers whose names are on record;
A summons to the Cuckoo shall be sent,
And judgment there be given; or that intent
Failing, we finally shall make accord.

LVII

And all this shall be done, without a nay,
The morrow after Saint Valentine's day,
Under a maple that is well beseen,
Before the chamber-window of the Queen,
At Woodstock, on the meadow green and gay.

LVIII

She thankèd them; and then her leave she took,
And flew into a hawthorn by that brook;
And there she sate and sung—upon that tree—
"For term of life Love shall have hold of me"—
So loudly, that I with that song awoke.

Unlearned Book and rude, as well I know,
For beauty thou hast none, nor eloquence,
Who did on thee the hardiness bestow
To appear before my Lady? but a sense
Thou surely hast of her benevolence,
Whereof her hourly bearing proof doth give;
For of all good she is the best alive.

Alas, poor Book! for thy unworthiness,
To show to her some pleasant meanings writ
In winning words, since through her gentiless,
Thee she accepts as for her service fit!
Oh! it repents me I have neither wit
Nor leisure unto thee more worth to give;
For of all good she is the best alive.

Beseech her meekly with all lowliness,
Though I be far from her I reverence,
To think upon my truth and stedfastness,
And to abridge my sorrow's violence,
Caused by the wish, as knows your sapience,
She of her liking proof to me would give;
For of all good she is the best alive.

L'ENVOY

Pleasure's Aurora, Day of gladsomeness!
Luna by night, with heavenly influence
Illumined! root of beauty and goodnesse,
Write, and allay, by your beneficence,
My sighs breathed forth in silence,—comfort give!
Since of all good, you are the best alive.

EXPLICIT 1801.

TROILUS AND CRESIDA

FROM CHAUCER

Next morning Troilus began to clear
His eyes from sleep, at the first break of day,
And unto Pandarus, his own Brother dear,
For love of God, full piteously did say,
We must the Palace see of Cresida;
For since we yet may have no other feast,
Let us behold her Palace at the least!

And therewithal to cover his intent
A cause he found into the Town to go,
And they right forth to Cresid's Palace went;
But, Lord, this simple Troilus was woe,
Him thought his sorrowful heart would break in two;
For when he saw her doors fast bolted all,
Well nigh for sorrow down he 'gan to fall.

Therewith when this true Lover 'gan behold,
How shut was every window of the place,
Like frost he thought his heart was icy cold;
For which, with changèd, pale, and deadly face,
Without word uttered, forth he 'gan to pace;
And on his purpose bent so fast to ride,
That no wight his continuance espied.

Then said he thus,—O Palace desolate!
O house of houses, once so richly dight!
O Palace empty and disconsolate!
Thou lamp of which extinguished is the light;
O Palace whilom day that now art night,
Thou ought'st to fall and I to die; since she
Is gone who held us both in sovereignty.

O, of all houses once the crownèd boast!
Palace illumined with the sun of bliss;
O ring of which the ruby now is lost,
O cause of woe, that cause has been of bliss:
Yet, since I may no better, would I kiss
Thy cold doors; but I dare not for this rout;
Farewell, thou shrine of which the Saint is out.

Therewith he cast on Pandarus an eye,
With changèd face, and piteous to behold;
And when he might his time aright espy,
Aye as he rode, to Pandarus he told
Both his new sorrow and his joys of old,
So piteously, and with so dead a hue,
That every wight might on his sorrow rue.

Forth from the spot he rideth up and down,
And everything to his rememberànce
Came as he rode by places of the town
Where he had felt such perfect pleasure once.
Lo, yonder saw I mine own Lady dance,
And in that Temple she with her bright eyes,
My Lady dear, first bound me captive-wise.

And yonder with joy-smitten heart have I
Heard my own Cresid's laugh; and once at play
I yonder saw her eke full blissfully;
And yonder once she unto me 'gan say—
Now, my sweet Troilus, love me well, I pray!
And there so graciously did me behold,
That hers unto the death my heart I hold.

And at the corner of that self-same house
Heard I my most belovèd Lady dear,
So womanly, with voice melodious
Singing so well, so goodly, and so clear,
That in my soul methinks I yet do hear
The blissful sound; and in that very place
My Lady first me took unto her grace.

O blissful God of Love! then thus he cried,
When I the process have in memory,
How thou hast wearied me on every side,
Men thence a book might make, a history;
What need to seek a conquest over me,
Since I am wholly at thy will? what joy
Hast thou thy own liege subjects to destroy?

Dread Lord! so fearful when provoked, thine ire
Well hast thou wreaked on me by pain and grief.
Now mercy, Lord! thou know'st well I desire
Thy grace above all pleasures first and chief;
And live and die I will in thy belief;
For which I ask for guerdon but one boon,
That Cresida again thou send me soon.

Constrain her heart as quickly to return,
As thou dost mine with longing her to see,
Then know I well that she would not sojourn.
Now, blissful Lord, so cruel do not be
Unto the blood of Troy, I pray of thee,
As Juno was unto the Theban blood,
From whence to Thebes came griefs in multitude.

And after this he to the gate did go,
Whence Cresid rode, as if in haste she was;
And up and down there went, and to and fro,
And to himself full oft he said, alas!
From hence my hope, and solace forth did pass.
O would the blissful God now for his joy,
I might her see again coming to Troy!

And up to yonder hill was I her guide;
Alas, and there I took of her my leave;
Yonder I saw her to her Father ride,
For very grief of which my heart shall cleave;—
And hither home I came when it was eve;
And here I dwell an outcast from all joy,
And shall, unless I see her soon in Troy.

And of himself did he imagine oft,
That he was blighted, pale, and waxen less
Than he was wont; and that in whispers soft
Men said, what may it be, can no one guess
Why Troilus hath all this heaviness?
All which he of himself conceited wholly
Out of his weakness and his melancholy.

Another time he took into his head,
That every wight, who in the way passed by,
Had of him ruth, and fancied that they said,

I am right sorry Troilus will die:
And thus a day or two drove wearily;
As ye have heard; such life 'gan he to lead
As one that standeth betwixt hope and dread.

For which it pleased him in his songs to show
The occasion of his woe, as best he might;
And made a fitting song, of words but few,
Somewhat his woeful heart to make more light;
And when he was removed from all men's sight,
With a soft night voice, he of his Lady dear,
That absent was, 'gan sing as ye may hear.

O star, of which I lost have all the light,
With a sore heart well ought I to bewail,
That ever dark in torment, night by night,
Toward my death with wind I steer and sail;
For which upon the tenth night if thou fail
With thy bright beams to guide me but one hour,
My ship and me Charybdis will devour.

As soon as he this song had thus sung through,
He fell again into his sorrows old;
And every night, as was his wont to do,
Troilus stood the bright moon to behold;
And all his trouble to the moon he told,
And said; I wis, when thou art horn'd anew,
I shall be glad if all the world be true.

Thy horns were old as now upon that morrow,
When hence did journey my bright Lady dear,
That cause is of my torment and my sorrow;
For which, oh, gentle Luna, bright and clear;
For love of God, run fast above thy sphere;
For when thy horns begin once more to spring,
Then shall she come, that with her bliss may bring.

The day is more, and longer every night
Than they were wont to be—for he thought so;
And that the sun did take his course not right,
By longer way than he was wont to go;
And said, I am in constant dread I trow,
That Phäeton his son is yet alive,
His too fond father's car amiss to drive.

Upon the walls fast also would he walk,
To the end that he the Grecian host might see;
And ever thus he to himself would talk:—
Lo! yonder is my own bright Lady free;
Or yonder is it that the tents must be;
And thence does come this air which is so sweet,
That in my soul I feel the joy of it.

And certainly this wind, that more and more
By moments thus increaseth in my face,
Is of my Lady's sighs heavy and sore;
I prove it thus; for in no other space
Of all this town, save only in this place,
Feel I a wind, that soundeth so like pain;
It saith, Alas, why severed are we twain?

A weary while in pain he tosseth thus,
Till fully past and gone was the ninth night;
And ever at his side stood Pandarus,
Who busily made use of all his might
To comfort him, and make his heart more light;
Giving him always hope, that she the morrow
Of the tenth day will come, and end his sorrow. 1801.

THE SAILOR'S MOTHER

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. I met this woman near the Wishing-gate, on the high-road that then led from Grasmere to Ambleside. Her appearance was exactly as here described, and such was her account, nearly to the letter.

One morning (raw it was and wet—
A foggy day in winter time)
A Woman on the road I met,
Not old, though something past her prime:
Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
And like a Roman matron's was her mien and gait.

The ancient spirit is not dead;
Old times, thought I, are breathing there;
Proud was I that my country bred
Such strength, a dignity so fair:
She begged an alms, like one in poor estate;
I looked at her again, nor did my pride abate.

When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
"What is it," said I, "that you bear,
Beneath the covert of your Cloak,
Protected from this cold damp air?"
She answered, soon as she the question heard,
"A simple burthen, Sir, a little Singing-bird."

And, thus continuing, she said,
"I had a Son, who many a day
Sailed on the seas, but he is dead;
In Denmark he was cast away:
And I have travelled weary miles to see
If aught which he had owned might still remain for me.

"The bird and cage they both were his:
'Twas my Son's bird; and neat and trim
He kept it: many voyages
The singing-bird had gone with him;
When last he sailed, he left the bird behind;
From bodings, as might be, that hung upon his mind.

"He to a fellow-lodger's care
Had left it, to be watched and fed,
And pipe its song in safety;—there
I found it when my Son was dead;
And now, God help me for my little wit!
I bear it with me, Sir;—he took so much delight in it." 1802.

ALICE FELL;

OR, POVERTY

Written to gratify Mr. Graham of Glasgow, brother of the Author of "The Sabbath." He was a zealous coadjutor of Mr. Clarkson, and a man of ardent humanity. The incident had happened to himself, and he urged me to put it into verse, for humanity's sake. The humbleness, meanness if you like, of the subject, together with the homely mode of treating it, brought upon me a world of ridicule by the small critics, so that in policy I excluded it from many editions of my Poems, till it was restored at the request of some of my friends, in particular my son-in-law, Edward Quillinan.

The post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon had drowned;
When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound.

As if the wind blew many ways,
I heard the sound,—and more and more,
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy called out;
He stopped his horses at the word,
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain;
But, hearing soon upon the blast
The cry, I bade him halt again.

Forthwith alighting on the ground,
"Whence comes," said I, "this piteous moan?"
And there a little Girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

"My cloak!" no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

"What ails you, child?"—she sobbed "Look here!"
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er
From any garden scare-crow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed!

"And whither are you going, child,
To-night along these lonesome ways?"
"To Durham," answered she, half wild—
"Then come with me into the chaise."

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

"My child, in Durham do you dwell?"
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, "My name is Alice Fell;
I'm fatherless and motherless.

"And I to Durham, Sir, belong."
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
And all was for her tattered cloak!

The chaise drove on; our journey's end
Was nigh; and, sitting by my side,
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern-door we post;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

"And let it be of duffil grey,
As warm a cloak as man can sell!"
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell! 1802.

BEGGARS

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Met, and described to me by my Sister, near the quarry at the head of Rydal lake, a place still a chosen resort of vagrants travelling with their families.

She had a tall man's height or more;
Her face from summer's noontide heat
No bonnet shaded, but she wore
A mantle, to her very feet
Descending with a graceful flow,
And on her head a cap as white as new-fallen snow.

Her skin was of Egyptian brown:
Haughty, as if her eye had seen
Its own light to a distance thrown,
She towered, fit person for a Queen
To lead those ancient Amazonian files;
Or ruling Bandit's wife among the Grecian isles.

Advancing, forth she stretched her hand
And begged an alms with doleful plea
That ceased not; on our English land
Such woes, I knew, could never be;
And yet a boon I gave her, for the creature
Was beautiful to see—a weed of glorious feature.

I left her, and pursued my way;
And soon before me did espy
A pair of little Boys at play,
Chasing a crimson butterfly;
The taller followed with his hat in hand,
Wreathed round with yellow flowers the gayest of the land.

The other wore a rimless crown
With leaves of laurel stuck about;
And, while both followed up and down,
Each whooping with a merry shout,
In their fraternal features I could trace
Unquestionable lines of that wild Suppliant's face.

Yet *they*, so blithe of heart, seemed fit
For finest tasks of earth or air:
Wings let them have, and they might flit
Precursors to Aurora's car,
Scattering fresh flowers; though happier far, I ween,
To hunt their fluttering game o'er rock and level green.

They dart across my path—but lo,
Each ready with a plaintive whine!
Said I, "not half an hour ago
Your Mother has had alms of mine."
"That cannot be," one answered—"she is dead:"—
I looked reproof—they saw—but neither hung his head.

"She has been dead, Sir, many a day."—
"Hush, boys! you're telling me a lie;
It was your Mother, as I say!"
And, in the twinkling of an eye,
"Come! Come!" cried one, and without more ado,
Off to some other play the joyous Vagrants flew!

1802.

TO A BUTTERFLY

Written in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere. My sister and I were parted immediately after the death of our mother, who died in 1778, both being very young.

Stay near me—do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart!
Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My father's family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her, feared to brush
The dust from off its wings. 1802.

THE EMIGRANT MOTHER

Suggested by what I have noticed in more than one French fugitive during the time of the French Revolution. If I am not mistaken, the lines were composed at Sockburn, when I was on a visit to Mrs. Wordsworth and her brother.

Once in a lonely hamlet I sojourned
In which a Lady driven from France did dwell;
The big and lesser griefs with which she mourned,
In friendship she to me would often tell.
This Lady, dwelling upon British ground,
Where she was childless, daily would repair
To a poor neighbouring cottage; as I found,
For sake of a young Child whose home was there.

Once having seen her clasp with fond embrace
This Child, I chanted to myself a lay,
Endeavouring, in our English tongue, to trace
Such things as she unto the Babe might say:
And thus, from what I heard and knew, or guessed,
My song the workings of her heart expressed.

I

"Dear Babe, thou daughter of another,
One moment let me be thy mother!
An infant's face and looks are thine,
And sure a mother's heart is mine:
Thy own dear mother's far away,
At labour in the harvest field:
Thy little sister is at play;—
What warmth, what comfort would it yield
To my poor heart, if thou wouldst be
One little hour a child to me!

II

"Across the waters I am come,
And I have left a babe at home:
A long, long way of land and sea!
Come to me—I'm no enemy:
I am the same who at thy side
Sate yesterday, and made a nest
For thee, sweet Baby!—thou hast tried,
Thou know'st the pillow of my breast;
Good, good art thou:—alas! to me
Far more than I can be to thee.

III

"Here, little Darling, dost thou lie;
An infant thou, a mother I!
Mine wilt thou be, thou hast no fears;
Mine art thou—spite of these my tears.
Alas! before I left the spot,
My baby and its dwelling-place;
The nurse said to me, 'Tears should not
Be shed upon an infant's face,
It was unlucky'—no, no, no;
No truth is in them who say so!

IV

"My own dear Little-one will sigh,
Sweet Babe! and they will let him die.
'He pines,' they'll say, 'it is his doom,
And you may see his hour is come.'
Oh! had he but thy cheerful smiles,
Limbs stout as thine, and lips as gay,
Thy looks, thy cunning, and thy wiles,
And countenance like a summer's day,

They would have hopes of him;—and then
I should behold his face again!

V

"'Tis gone—like dreams that we forget;
There was a smile or two—yet—yet
I can remember them, I see
The smiles, worth all the world to me.
Dear Baby! I must lay thee down;
Thou troublest me with strange alarms;
Smiles hast thou, bright ones of thy own;
I cannot keep thee in my arms;
For they confound me;—where—where is
That last, that sweetest smile of his?

VI

"Oh! how I love thee!—we will stay
Together here this one half day.
My sister's child, who bears my name,
From France to sheltering England came;
She with her mother crossed the sea;
The babe and mother near me dwell:
Yet does my yearning heart to thee
Turn rather, though I love her well:
Rest, little Stranger, rest thee here!
Never was any child more dear!

VII

"—I cannot help it; ill intent
I've none, my pretty Innocent!
I weep—I know they do thee wrong,
These tears—and my poor idle tongue.
Oh, what a kiss was that! my cheek
How cold it is! but thou art good;
Thine eyes are on me—they would speak,
I think, to help me if they could.
Blessings upon that soft, warm face,
My heart again is in its place!

VIII

"While thou art mine, my little Love,
This cannot be a sorrowful grove;
Contentment, hope, and mother's glee,
I seem to find them all in thee:
Here's grass to play with, here are flowers;
I'll call thee by my darling's name;
Thou hast, I think, a look of ours,
Thy features seem to me the same;
His little sister thou shalt be;
And, when once more my home I see,
I'll tell him many tales of Thee."

1802.

"MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD"

Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

1802.

"AMONG ALL LOVELY THINGS MY LOVE HAD BEEN"

Among all lovely things my Love had been;
Had noted well the stars, all flowers that grew
About her home; but she had never seen
A glow-worm, never one, and this I knew.

While riding near her home one stormy night
A single glow-worm did I chance to espy;
I gave a fervent welcome to the sight,
And from my horse I leapt; great joy had I.

Upon a leaf the glow-worm did I lay,
To bear it with me through the stormy night:
And, as before, it shone without dismay;
Albeit putting forth a fainter light.

When to the dwelling of my Love I came,
I went into the orchard quietly;
And left the glow-worm, blessing it by name,
Laid safely by itself, beneath a tree.

The whole next day, I hoped, and hoped with fear;
At night the glow-worm shone beneath the tree;
I led my Lucy to the spot, "Look here,"
Oh! joy it was for her, and joy for me!

1802.

WRITTEN IN MARCH

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF BROTHER'S WATER.

Extempore. This little poem was a favourite with Joanna Baillie.

The Cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The ploughboy is whooping—anon—anon:
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone! 1802.

THE REDBREAST CHASING THE BUTTERFLY

Observed, as described, in the then beautiful orchard, Town-end, Grasmere.

Art thou the bird whom Man loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin;
The bird that comes about our doors
When Autumn-winds are sobbing?
Art thou the Peter of Norway Boors?
Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland?
The bird, that by some name or other
All men who know thee call their brother,
The darling of children and men?
Could Father Adam[1] open his eyes
And see this sight beneath the skies,
He'd wish to close them again.
—If the Butterfly knew but his friend,
Hither his flight he would bend;
And find his way to me,
Under the branches of the tree:
In and out, he darts about;
Can this be the bird, to man so good,
That, after their bewildering,
Covered with leaves the little children,
So painfully in the wood?
What ailed thee, Robin, that thou could'st pursue
A beautiful creature,
That is gentle by nature?
Beneath the summer sky
From flower to flower let him fly;
'Tis all that he wishes to do.
The cheerer Thou of our in-door sadness,
He is the friend of our summer gladness:
What hinders, then, that ye should be
Playmates in the sunny weather,
And fly about in the air together!
His beautiful wings in crimson are drest,
A crimson as bright as thine own:
Would'st thou be happy in thy nest,
O pious Bird! whom man loves best,
Love him, or leave him alone! 1802.

TO A BUTTERFLY

Written in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere.

I've watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless!—not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young·
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now. 1802.

FORESIGHT

Also composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere.

That is work of waste and ruin—
Do as Charles and I are doing!
Strawberry-blossoms, one and all,
We must spare them—here are many:

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[1] See *Paradise Lost*, Book XI., where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the Eagle chasing "two birds of gayest plume," and the gentle Hart and Hind pursued by their enemy.

Look at it—the flower is small,
Small and low, though fair as any:
Do not touch it! summers two
I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the primrose, sister Anne!
Pull as many as you can.
—Here are daisies, take your fill;
Pansies, and the cuckoo-flower:
Of the lofty daffodil
Make your bed, or make your bower;
Fill your lap, and fill your bosom;
Only spare the strawberry-blossom!

Primroses, the Spring may love them—
Summer knows but little of them:
Violets, a barren kind,
Withered on the ground must lie;
Daisies leave no fruit behind
When the pretty flowerets die;
Pluck them, and another year
As many will be blowing here.

God has given a kindlier power
To the favoured strawberry-flower.
Hither soon as spring is fled
You and Charles and I will walk;
Lurking berries, ripe and red,
Then will hang on every stalk,
Each within its leafy bower;
And for that promise spare the flower!
1802.

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE[1]

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. It is remarkable that this flower, coming out so early in the spring as it does, and so bright and beautiful, and in such profusion, should not have been noticed earlier in English verse. What adds much to the interest that attends it is its habit of shutting itself up and opening out according to the degree of light and temperature of the air.

PANSIES, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story:
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little Flower!—I'll make a stir,
Like a sage astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself;
Since we needs must first have met
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
Travel with the multitude:
Never heed them; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers;
But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home;
Spring is coming, Thou art come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane;—there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!
Buttercups, that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine!

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth;

---

[1] Common Pilewort.

Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command,
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

1802.

TO THE SAME FLOWER

Pleasures newly found are sweet
When they lie about our feet:
February last, my heart
First at sight of thee was glad;
All unheard of as thou art,
Thou must needs, I think, have had,
Celandine! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know.

I have not a doubt but he,
Whosoe'er the man might be,
Who the first with pointed rays
(Workman worthy to be sainted)
Set the sign-board in a blaze,
When the rising sun he painted,
Took the fancy from a glance
At thy glittering countenance.

Soon as gentle breezes bring
News of winter's vanishing,
And the children build their bowers,
Sticking 'kerchief-plots of mould
All about with full-blown flowers,
Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold!
With the proudest thou art there,
Mantling in the tiny square.

Often have I sighed to measure
By myself a lonely pleasure,
Sighed to think, I read a book
Only read, perhaps, by me;
Yet I long could overlook
Thy bright coronet and Thee,
And thy arch and wily ways,
And thy store of other praise.

Blithe of heart, from week to week
Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;
While the patient primrose sits
Like a beggar in the cold,
Thou, a flower of wiser wits,
Slipp'st into thy sheltering hold;
Liveliest of the vernal train
When ye all are out again.

Drawn by what peculiar spell,
By what charm of sight or smell,
Does the dim-eyed curious Bee,
Labouring for her waxen cells,
Fondly settle upon Thee
Prized above all buds and bells
Opening daily at thy side,
By the season multiplied?

Thou art not beyond the moon,
But a thing "beneath our shoon:"
Let the bold Discoverer thrid
In his bark the polar sea;
Rear who will a pyramid;
Praise it is enough for me,
If there be but three or four
Who will love my little Flower.

1802.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. This old Man I met a few hundred yards from my cottage; and the account of him is taken from his own mouth. I was in the state of feeling described in the beginning of the poem, while crossing over Barton Fell from Mr. Clarkson's, at the foot of Ullswater, towards Askham. The image of the hare I then observed on the ridge of the Fell.

I

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

II

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor,
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low;
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could name.

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

VII

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we deified:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;

X

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look

Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book:
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,
"What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes,

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

V

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance,
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

XVII

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!"

1802.

"I GRIEVED FOR BUONAPARTÉ"

I GRIEVED for Buonaparté, with a vain
And an unthinking grief! The tenderest mood
Of that Man's mind—what can it be? what food
Fed his first hopes? what knowledge could *he* gain?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
By which true Sway doth mount; this is the stalk
True Power doth grow on; and her rights are these. 1802.

A FAREWELL

Composed just before my sister and I went to fetch Mrs. Wordsworth from Gallow-hill, near Scarborough.

FAREWELL, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare;
Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell!—we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And there will safely ride when we are gone;
The flowering shrubs that deck our humble door
Will prosper, though untended and alone:
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none:
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon;
Here are they in our sight—we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell!
For two months now in vain we shall be sought:
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell!
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky Well.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear;
And she will prize this Bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, Building without peer!
—A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gatherèd,
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,
Will come to you; to you herself will wed;
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear Spot! which we have watched with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness registered and known;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle Place,
Thou hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show
To them who look not daily on thy face;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
And say'st, when we forsake thee, "Let them go!"
Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell Her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best;
Joy will be flown in its mortality;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast
Glittered at evening like a starry sky;
And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sang one song that will not die.

O happy Garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;
And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with Her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.
1802.

"THE SUN HAS LONG BEEN SET"

Reprinted at the request of my Sister, in whose presence the lines were thrown off.

This *Impromptu* appeared, many years ago, among the Author's poems, from which, in subsequent editions, it was excluded.

THE sun has long been set,
  The stars are out by twos and threes,
The little birds are piping yet
  Among the bushes and trees;
There's a cuckoo, and one or two thrushes,
And a far-off wind that rushes,
And a sound of water that gushes,
And the cuckoo's sovereign cry
Fills all the hollow of the sky.
  Who would "go parading"
In London, "and masquerading,"
On such a night of June
With that beautiful soft half-moon,
And all these innocent blisses?
On such a night as this is! 1802.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1802

Written on the roof of a coach, on my way to France.

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST 1802

FAIR Star of evening, Splendour of the west,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.

Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory!—I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

CALAIS, AUGUST 1802

Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see?
Lords, lawyers, statesmen, squires of low degree,
Men known, and men unknown, sick, lame, and blind,
Post forward all, like creatures of one kind,
With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
In France, before the new-born Majesty.
'Tis ever thus. Ye men of prostrate mind,
A seemly reverence may be paid to power;
But that's a loyal virtue, never sown
In haste, nor springing with a transient shower:
When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown,
What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery prone!

COMPOSED NEAR CALAIS, ON THE ROAD LEADING TO ARDRES, AUGUST 7, 1802

JONES! as from Calais southward you and I
Went pacing side by side, this public Way
Streamed with the pomp of a too-credulous day,[1]
When faith was pledged to new-born Liberty:
A homeless sound of joy was in the sky:
From hour to hour the antiquated Earth
Beat like the heart of Man: songs, garlands, mirth,
Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh!
And now, sole register that these things were,
Two solitary greetings have I heard,
"*Good-morrow, Citizen!*" a hollow word,
As if a dead man spake it! Yet despair
Touches me not, though pensive as a bird
Whose vernal coverts winter hath laid bare.[2]

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[1] 14th July 1790.

[2] See Note.

CALAIS, AUGUST 15, 1802

FESTIVALS have I seen that were not names:
This is young Buonaparté's natal day,
And his is henceforth an established sway—
Consul for life. With worship France proclaims
Her approbation, and with pomps and games.
Heaven grant that other Cities may be gay!
Calais is not: and I have bent my way
To the sea-coast, noting that each man frames
His business as he likes. Far other show
My youth here witnessed, in a prouder time;
The senselessness of joy was then sublime!
Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
The destiny of Man, and live in hope.

"IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE"

This was composed on the beach near Calais, in the autumn of 1802.

IT is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.
1802.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,

Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away. 1802.

THE KING OF SWEDEN

The Voice of song from distant lands shall call
To that great King; shall hail the crownèd Youth
Who, taking counsel of unbending Truth,
By one example hath set forth to all
How they with dignity may stand; or fall,
If fall they must. Now, whither doth it tend?
And what to him and his shall be the end?
That thought is one which neither can appal
Nor cheer him; for the illustrious Swede hath done
The thing which ought to be; is raised *above*
All consequences: work he hath begun
Of fortitude, and piety, and love,
Which all his glorious ancestors approve:
The heroes bless him, him their rightful son.[1] 1802.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.
1802.

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY NEAR DOVER, ON THE DAY OF LANDING

Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more.
The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that sound
Of bells; those boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white-sleeved shirts are playing; and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore;—
All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
Myself so satisfied in heart before.
Europe is yet in bonds; but let that pass,
Thought for another moment. Thou art free,
My Country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear Companion at my side.
1802.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1802

Among the capricious acts of tyranny that disgraced those times, was the chasing of all Negroes from France by decree of the government: we had a Fellow-passenger who was one of the expelled.

We had a female Passenger who came
From Calais with us, spotless in array,—
A white-robed Negro, like a lady gay,
Yet downcast as a woman fearing blame;
Meek, destitute, as seemed, of hope or aim
She sate, from notice turning not away,
But on all proffered intercourse did lay
A weight of languid speech, or to the same
No sign of answer made by word or face:

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[1] See Note.

Yet still her eyes retained their tropic fire,
That, burning independent of the mind,
Joined with the lustre of her rich attire
To mock the Outcast.—O ye Heavens, be kind!
And feel, thou Earth, for this afflicted Race!

NEAR DOVER, SEPTEMBER 1802

INLAND, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The coast of France—the coast of France how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk; for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity;
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the soul
Only, the Nations shall be great and free.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER 1802

This was written immediately after my return from France to London, when I could not but be struck, as here described, with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the revolution had produced in France. This must be borne in mind, or else the reader may think that in this and the succeeding Sonnets I have exaggerated the mischief engendered and fostered among us by undisturbed wealth. It would not be easy to conceive with what a depth of feeling I entered into the struggle carried on by the Spaniards for their deliverance from the usurped power of the French. Many times have I gone from Allan Bank in Grasmere vale, where we were then residing, to the top of the Raise-gap as it is called, so late as two o'clock in the morning, to meet the carrier bringing the newspaper from Keswick. Imperfect traces of the state of mind in which I then was may be found in my Tract on the Convention of Cintra, as well as in these Sonnets.

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more;
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

LONDON, 1802

MILTON! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

"GREAT MEN HAVE BEEN AMONG US"

GREAT men have been among us; hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none:
The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
These moralists could act and comprehend:
They knew how genuine glory was put on;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendour: what strength was, that would not bend

But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange,
Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road;
But equally a want of books and men!
1802.

"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF"

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.
1802.

"WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY"

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men:
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!
1802.

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HAMBLETON HILLS, YORKSHIRE

Composed October 4th, 1802, after a journey over the Hambleton Hills, on a day memorable to me—the day of my marriage. The horizon commanded by those hills is most magnificent.—The next day, while we were travelling in a post-chaise up Wensleydale, we were stopt by one of the horses proving restive, and were obliged to wait two hours in a severe storm before the post-boy could fetch from the inn another to supply its place. The spot was in front of Bolton Hall, where Mary Queen of Scots was kept prisoner soon after her unfortunate landing at Workington. The place then belonged to the Scroopes, and memorials of her are yet preserved there. To beguile the time I composed a Sonnet. The subject was our own confinement contrasted with hers; but it was not thought worthy of being preserved.

Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell;
The wished-for point was reached—but at an hour
When little could be gained from that rich dower
Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.
Yet did the glowing west with marvellous power
Salute us; there stood Indian citadel,
Temple of Greece, and minster with its tower
Substantially expressed—a place for bell
Or clock to toll from! Many a tempting isle,
With groves that never were imagined, lay
'Mid seas how steadfast! objects all for the eye
Of silent rapture; but we felt the while
We should forget them; they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.
1802.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF THOMSON'S "CASTLE OF INDOLENCE"

Composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere, Coleridge living with us much at the time: his son Hartley has said, that his father's character and habits are here preserved in a livelier way than in anything that has been written about him

Within our happy Castle there dwelt One
Whom without blame I may not overlook;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took:
Here on his hours he hung as on a book,
On his own time here would he float away,
As doth a fly upon a summer brook;
But go to-morrow, or belike to-day,
Seek for him,—he is fled; and whither none can say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful home,
And find elsewhere his business or delight;
Out of our Valley's limits did he roam:
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighbouring height:
Oft could we see him driving full in view
At mid-day when the sun was shining bright;
What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah! piteous sight it was to see this Man
When he came back to us, a withered flower,—
Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
Down would he sit; and without strength or power
Look at the common grass from hour to hour:
And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,
Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay;
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was
Whenever from our Valley he withdrew;
For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.
Some thought he was a lover, and did woo:
Some thought far worse of him, and judged him wrong;
But verse was what he had been wedded to;
And his own mind did like a tempest strong
Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight along.

With him there often walked in friendly guise,
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
A noticeable Man with large gray eyes,
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
As if a blooming face it ought to be;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe;
Yet some did think that he had little business here:

Sweet heaven forfend! his was a lawful right;
Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;
His limbs would toss about him with delight
Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.
Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care;
He would have taught you how you might employ
Yourself; and many did to him repair,—
And certes not in vain; he had inventions rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried:
Long blades of grass, plucked round him as he lay,
Made, to his ear attentively applied,
A pipe on which the wind would deftly play;
Glasses he had, that little things display,
The beetle panoplied in gems and gold,
A mailèd angel on a battle-day;
The mysteries that cups of flowers enfold,
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.

He would entice that other Man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery:
And, sooth, these two were each to the other dear:
No livelier love in such a place could be:
There did they dwell—from earthly labour free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen;
If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a Maiden-queen.

1802.

TO H. C.

SIX YEARS OLD

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
Thou faery voyager! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
O blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.
I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality;
And Grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly!
O vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow?
Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life. 1802.

TO THE DAISY[1]

This and the two following were composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere, where the bird was often seen as here described.

"Her[2] divine skill taught me this,
That from every thing I saw
I could some instruction draw,
And raise pleasure to the height
Through the meanest object's sight.
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustelling;
By a Daisy whose leaves spread
Shut when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush or tree;
She could more infuse in me
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man.'

G. WITHER

IN youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
Most pleased when most uneasy;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly Nature's love partake,
Of Thee, sweet Daisy!

Thee Winter in the garland wears
That thinly decks his few grey hairs;
Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
That she may sun thee;
Whole Summer-fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy Wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight
When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane;
Pleased at his greeting thee again;
Yet nothing daunted,
Nor grieved if thou be set at nought:
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such are wanted.

Be violets in their secret mews
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
Her head impearling,
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art!—a friend at hand, to scare
His melancholy.

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[1] See Note.

[2] His muse.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension;
Some steady love; some brief delight;
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right;
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to Thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn
A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life, our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-smitten by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
With kindred gladness:
And when, at dusk, by dews opprest
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing;
An instinct call it, a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the Year! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course,—when day's begun
As ready to salute the sun
As lark or leveret,
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time;—thou not in vain
Art Nature's favourite.[1] 1802.

TO THE SAME FLOWER

With little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Daisy! again I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace,
Which Love makes for thee!

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with similies,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humour of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations;
A queen in crown of rubies drest;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next—and instantly
The freak is over,
The shape will vanish—and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some faery bold
In fight to cover!

I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
May peace come never to his nest,
Who shall reprove thee!

Bright *Flower!* for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!
1802

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[1] See, in Chaucer and the elder Poets, the honours formerly paid to this flower.

TO THE DAISY

This and the other Poems addressed to the same flower were composed at Town-end, Grasmere, during the earlier part of my residence there. I have been censured for the last line but one—"thy function apostolical"—as being little less than profane. How could it be thought so? The word is adopted with reference to its derivation, implying something sent on a mission; and assuredly this little flower, especially when the subject of verse, may be regarded, in its humble degree, as administering both to moral and to spiritual purposes.

Bright Flower! whose home is everywhere,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy or sorrow;
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough!

Is it that Man is soon deprest?
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,
And Thou would'st teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all
Thy function apostolical
In peace fulfilling. 1802.

THE GREEN LINNET

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment:
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.
1803.

YEW-TREES

Written at Grasmere. These yew-trees are still standing, but the spread of that at Lorton is much diminished by mutilation. I will here mention that a little way up the hill, on the road leading from Rosthwaite to Stonethwaite (in Borrowdale), lay the trunk of a yew-tree, which appeared as you approached, so vast was its diameter, like the entrance of a cave, and not a small one. Calculating upon what I have observed of the slow growth of this tree in rocky situations, and of its durability, I have often thought that the one I am describing must have been as old as the Christian era. The tree lay in the line of a fence. Great masses of its ruins were strewn about, and some had been rolled down the hillside and lay near the road at the bottom. As you approached the tree, you were struck with the number of shrubs and young plants, ashes, etc., which had found a bed upon the decayed trunk and grew to no inconsiderable height, forming, as it were, a part of the hedgerow. In no part of England, or of Europe, have I ever seen a yew-tree at all approaching this in magnitude, as it must have stood. By the bye, Hutton, the old Guide, of Keswick, had been so impressed with the remains of this tree, that he used gravely to tell strangers that there could be no doubt of its having been in existence before the flood.

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore;
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poictiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree! a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane;—a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow;—there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.
1803.

"WHO FANCIED WHAT A PRETTY SIGHT"

WHO fancied what a pretty sight
This Rock would be if edged around
With living snow-drops? circlet bright!
How glorious to this orchard-ground!
Who loved the little Rock, and set
Upon its head this coronet?

Was it the humour of a child?
Or rather of some gentle maid,
Whose brows, the day that she was styled
The shepherd-queen, were thus arrayed?
Of man mature, or matron sage?
Or old man toying with his age!

I asked—'twas whispered; The device
To each and all might well belong:
It is the Spirit of Paradise
That prompts such work, a Spirit strong,
That gives to all the self-same bent
Where life is wise and innocent. 1803.

"IT IS NO SPIRIT WHO FROM HEAVEN HATH FLOWN"

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. I remember the instant my sister, S. H., called me to the window of our Cottage, saying, "Look how beautiful is yon star! It has the sky all to itself." I composed the verses immediately.

IT is no Spirit who from heaven hath flown,
And is descending on his embassy;
Nor Traveller gone from earth the heavens to espy!
'Tis Hesperus—there he stands with glittering crown,
First admonition that the sun is down!
For yet it is broad day-light: clouds pass by;
A few are near him still—and now the sky,
He hath it to himself—'tis all his own.
O most ambitious Star! an inquest wrought
Within me when I recognised thy light;
A moment I was startled at the sight:
And, while I gazed, there came to me a thought
That I might step beyond my natural race
As thou seem'st now to do; might one day trace
Some ground not mine; and, strong her strength above,
My Soul, an Apparition in the place,
Tread there with steps that no one shall reprove! 1803.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND

1803

Mr. Coleridge, my Sister, and myself started together from Town-end to make a tour in Scotland. Poor Coleridge was at that time in bad spirits, and somewhat too much in love with his own dejection; and he departed from us, as is recorded in my Sister's Journal, soon after we left Loch Lomond. The verses that stand foremost among these Memorials were not actually written for the occasion, but transplanted from my "Epistle to Sir George Beaumont."

I

DEPARTURE FROM THE VALE OF GRASMERE

AUGUST 1803

THE gentlest Shade that walked Elysian
plains
Might sometimes covet dissoluble chains;
Even for the tenants of the zone that lies
Beyond the stars, celestial Paradise,
Methinks 'twould heighten joy, to overleap
At will the crystal battlements, and peep
Into some other region, though less fair,
To see how things are made and managed
there.
Change for the worse might please, incursion bold
Into the tracts of darkness and of cold;
O'er Limbo lake with aëry flight to steer,
And on the verge of Chaos hang in fear.
Such animation often do I find,
Power in my breast, wings growing in my
mind,
Then, when some rock or hill is overpast,
Perhance without one look behind me cast.
Some barrier with which Nature, from the
birth
Of things, has fenced this fairest spot on
earth.
O pleasant transit, Grasmere! to resign
Such happy fields, abodes so calm as thine;
Not like an outcast with himself at strife;
The slave of business, time, or care for life,
But moved by choice; or, if constrained in
part,
Yet still with Nature's freedom at the
heart;—
To cull contentment upon wildest shores,
And luxuries extract from bleakest moors;
With prompt embrace all beauty to enfold,
And having rights in all that we behold.
—Then why these lingering steps?—A
bright adieu,
For a brief absence, proves that love is
true;
Ne'er can the way be irksome or forlorn
That winds into itself for sweet return.

II

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS

1803

SEVEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

For illustration, see my Sister's Journal. It may be proper to add that the second of these pieces, though *felt* at the time, was not composed till many years after.

I SHIVER, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold:
As vapours breathed from dungeons cold,
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mould
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that's here
I shrink with pain;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight—nor press on weight!—away
Dark thoughts!—they came, but not to
stay;
With chastened feelings would I pay
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
He sang, his genius "glinted" forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow,
The struggling heart, where be they now?—
Full soon the Aspirant of the plough,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave.

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved, for He was gone
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
And showed my youth
How Verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.

Alas! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends,—
Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw seen,—
Neighbours we were, and loving friends
We might have been;

True friends though diversely inclined;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibres are entwined,
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

The tear will start, and let it flow;
Thou "poor Inhabitant below,"
At this dread moment—even so—
Might we together
Have sate and talked where gowans blow,
Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been placed
Within my reach; of knowledge graced
By fancy what a rich repast!
But why go on?—
Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
His grave grass-grown.

There, too, a Son, his joy and pride,
(Not three weeks past the Stripling died,)
Lies gathered to his Father's side,
Soul-moving sight!
Yet one to which is not denied
Some sad delight:

For *he* is safe, a quiet bed
Hath early found among the dead,
Harboured where none can be misled,
Wronged, or distrest;
And surely here it may be said
That such are blest.

And oh for Thee, by pitying grace
Checked oft-times in a devious race,
May He who halloweth the place
Where Man is laid
Receive thy Spirit in the embrace
For which it prayed!

Sighing I turned away; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near,
A ritual hymn,
Chaunted in love that casts out fear
By Seraphim.

III

THOUGHTS

SUGGESTED THE DAY FOLLOWING, ON THE BANKS OF NITH, NEAR THE POET'S RESIDENCE

Too frail to keep the lofty vow
That must have followed when his brow
Was wreathed—"The Vision" tells us how—
With holly spray,
He faltered, drifted to and fro,
And passed away.

Well might such thoughts, dear Sister, throng
Our minds when, lingering all too long,
Over the grave of Burns we hung
In social grief—
Indulged as if it were a wrong
To seek relief.

But, leaving each unquiet theme
Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
And prompt to welcome every gleam
Of good and fair,
Let us beside this limpid Stream
Breathe hopeful air.

Enough of sorrow, wreck, and blight;
Think rather of those moments bright
When to the consciousness of right
His course was true,
When Wisdom prospered in his sight
And virtue grew.

Yes, freely let our hearts expand,
Freely as in youth's season bland,
When side by side, his Book in hand,
We wont to stray,
Our pleasure varying at command
Of each sweet Lay.

How oft inspired must he have trod
These pathways, yon far-stretching road!
There lurks his home; in that Abode,
With mirth elate,
Or in his nobly-pensive mood,
The Rustic sate.

Proud thoughts that Image overawes,
Before it humbly let us pause,
And ask of Nature, from what cause
And by what rules
She trained her Burns to win applause
That shames the Schools.

Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen;
He rules 'mid winter snows, and when
Bees fill their hives;
Deep in the general heart of men
His power survives.

What need of fields in some far clime
Where Heroes, Sages, Bards sublime,
And all that fetched the flowing rhyme
From genuine springs,
Shall dwell together till old Time
Folds up his wings?

Sweet Mercy! to the gates of Heaven
This Minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
With vain endeavour,
And memory of Earth's bitter leaven,
Effaced for ever.

But why to Him confine the prayer,
When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
With all that live?—
The best of what we do and are,
Just God, forgive![1]

IV

TO THE SONS OF BURNS

AFTER VISITING THE GRAVE OF THEIR FATHER

"The Poet's grave is in a corner of the churchyard. We looked at it with melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own verses—

"'Is there a man whose judgment clear,' etc."

Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-Traveller.

'Mid crowded obelisks and urns
I sought the untimely grave of Burns;
Sons of the Bard, my heart still mourns
With sorrow true;
And more would grieve, but that it turns
Trembling to you!

Through twilight shades of good and ill
Ye now are panting up life's hill,
And more than common strength and skill
Must ye display;
If ye would give the better will
Its lawful sway.

Hath Nature strung your nerves to bear
Intemperance with less harm, beware!
But if the Poet's wit ye share,
Like him can speed
The social hour—of tenfold care
There will be need;

For honest men delight will take
To spare your failings for his sake,
Will flatter you,—and fool and rake
Your steps pursue;
And of your Father's name will make
A snare for you.

Far from their noisy haunts retire,
And add your voices to the quire
That sanctify the cottage fire
With service meet;
There seek the genius of your Sire,
His spirit greet;

Or where, 'mid "lonely heights and hows,"
He paid to Nature tuneful vows;
Or wiped his honourable brows
Bedewed with toil,
While reapers strove, or busy ploughs
Upturned the soil;

His judgment with benignant ray
Shall guide, his fancy cheer, your way;
But ne'er to a seductive lay
Let faith be given;
Nor deem that "light which leads astray,
Is light from Heaven."

Let no mean hope your souls enslave;
Be independent, generous, brave;
Your Father such example gave,
And such revere;
But be admonished by his grave,
And think, and fear!

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[1] See Note

V

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

AT INVERSNEYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND

This delightful creature and her demeanour are particularly described in my Sister's Journal. The sort of prophecy with which the verses conclude has, through God's goodness, been realised; and now, approaching the close of my 73d year, I have a most vivid remembrance of her and the beautiful objects with which she was surrounded. She is alluded to in the Poem of "The Three Cottage Girls" among my Continental Memorials. In illustration of this class of poems I have scarcely anything to say beyond what is anticipated in my Sister's faithful and admirable Journal.

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these grey rocks; that household lawn;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay; a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy Abode—
In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
But, O fair Creature! in the light
Of common day, so heavenly bright,
I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart;
God shield thee to thy latest years!
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.
With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered, like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountaineer:
A face with gladness overspread!
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech:
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
Thus beating up against the wind.
What hand but would a garland cull
For thee who art so beautiful?
O happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell;
Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder Brother I would be,
Thy Father—anything to thee!
Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompence.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
Then, why should I be loth to stir?
I feel this place was made for her;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part:
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all!

VI

GLEN-ALMAIN;

OR, THE NARROW GLEN

IN this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the NARROW GLEN;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one:

He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet;
But this is calm; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.
  Does then the Bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?
What matters it?—I blame them not
Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot
Was moved; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this Dell.
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these:
The separation that is here
Is of the grave; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead:
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race!
Lies buried in this lonely place.

VII

STEPPING WESTWARD

While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a Hut where, in the course of our Tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What, you are stepping westward?"

"*What, you are stepping westward?*"—"*Yea.*"
—'Twould be a *wildish* destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange Land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of Chance:
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
Behind, all gloomy to behold;
And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny:
I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound
Of something without place or bound;
And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake:
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy:
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

VIII

THE SOLITARY REAPER

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

IX

ADDRESS TO KILCHURN CASTLE, UPON LOCH AWE

The first three lines were thrown off at the moment I first caught sight of the Ruin from a small eminence by the wayside; the rest was added many years after.

"From the top of the hill a most impressive scene opened upon our view,—a ruined Castle on an Island (for an Island the flood had made it) at some distance from the shore, backed by a Cove of the Mountain Cruachan, down which came a foaming stream. The Castle occupied every foot of the Island that was visible to us, appearing to rise out of the water,—mists rested upon the mountain side, with spots of sunshine; there was a mild desolation in the low grounds, a solemn grandeur in the mountains, and the Castle was wild, yet stately—not dismantled of turrets—nor the walls broken down, though obviously a ruin."—*Extract from the Journal of my Companion.*

CHILD of loud-throated War! the mountain Stream
Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
Is come, and thou art silent in thy age;
Save when the wind sweeps by and sounds are caught
Ambiguous, neither wholly thine nor theirs.
Oh! there is life that breathes not; Powers there are
That touch each other to the quick in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
No soul to dream of. What art Thou, from care
Cast off—abandoned by thy rugged Sire,
Nor by soft Peace adopted; though, in place
And in dimension, such that thou might'st seem
But a mere footstool to yon sovereign Lord,
Huge Cruachan, (a thing that meaner hills
Might crush, nor know that it had suffered harm;)
Yet he, not loth, in favour of thy claims
To reverence, suspends his own; submitting
All that the God of Nature hath conferred,
All that he holds in common with the stars,
To the memorial majesty of Time
Impersonated in thy calm decay!
Take, then, thy seat, Vicegerent unreproved!
Now, while a farewell gleam of evening light
Is fondly lingering on thy shattered front,
Do thou, in turn, be paramount; and rule
Over the pomp and beauty of a scene
Whose mountains, torrents, lake, and woods, unite
To pay thee homage; and with these are joined,
In willing admiration and respect,
Two Hearts, which in thy presence might be called
Youthful as Spring.—Shade of departed Power,
Skeleton of unfleshed humanity,
The chronicle were welcome that should call
Into the compass of distinct regard
The toils and struggles of thy infant years!
Yon foaming flood seems motionless as ice;
Its dizzy turbulence eludes the eye,
Frozen by distance; so, majestic Pile,
To the perception of this Age, appear
Thy fierce beginnings, softened and subdued
And quieted in character—the strife,
The pride, the fury uncontrollable,
Lost on the aërial heights of the Crusades![1]

X

ROB ROY'S GRAVE

I have since been told that I was misinformed as to the burial-place of Rob Roy. If so, I may plead in excuse that I wrote on apparently good authority, namely, that of a well-educated Lady who lived at the head of the Lake, within a mile or less of the point indicated as containing the remains of One so famous in the neighbourhood.

The history of Rob Roy is sufficiently known; his grave is near the head of Loch Ketterine, in one of those small pinfold-like Burial-grounds, of neglected and desolate appearance, which the traveller meets with in the Highlands of Scotland.

A FAMOUS man is Robin Hood,
The English ballad-singer's joy!
And Scotland has a thief as good,
An outlaw of as daring mood;

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[1] The tradition is, that the Castle was built by a Lady during the absence of her Lord in Palestine.

She has her brave Rob Roy!
Then clear the weeds from off his Grave,
And let us chant a passing stave,
In honour of that Hero brave!

Heaven gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart
And wondrous length and strength of arm:
Nor craved he more to quell his foes,
Or keep his friends from harm.

Yet was Rob Roy as *wise* as brave;
Forgive me if the phrase be strong;—
A Poet worthy of Rob Roy
Must scorn a timid song.

Say, then, that he was wise as brave;
As wise in thought as bold in deed:
For in the principles of things
He sought his moral creed.

Said generous Rob, "What need of books?
Burn all the statutes and their shelves:
They stir us up against our kind;
And worse, against ourselves.

"We have a passion—make a law,
Too false to guide us or control!
And for the law itself we fight
In bitterness of soul.

"And, puzzled, blinded thus, we lose
Distinctions that are plain and few:
These find I graven on my heart:
That tells me what to do.

"The creatures see of flood and field,
And those that travel on the wind!
With them no strife can last; they live
In peace, and peace of mind.

"For why?—because the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

"A lesson that is quickly learned,
A signal this which all can see!
Thus nothing here provokes the strong
To wanton cruelty.

"All freakishness of mind is checked;
He tamed, who foolishly aspires;
While to the measure of his might
Each fashions his desires.

"All kinds, and creatures, stand and fall
By strength of prowess or of wit:
'Tis God's appointment who must sway,
And who is to submit.

"Since, then, the rule of right is plain,
And longest life is but a day;
To have my ends, maintain my rights,
I'll take the shortest way."

And thus among these rocks he lived,
Through summer heat and winter snow:
The Eagle, he was lord above,
And Rob was lord below.

So was it—*would*, at least, have been
But through untowardness of fate;
For Polity was then too strong—
He came an age too late;

Or shall we say an age too soon?
For, were the bold Man living *now*,
How might he flourish in his pride,
With buds on every bough!

Then rents and factors, rights of chase,
Sheriffs, and lairds and their domains,
Would all have seemed but paltry things,
Not worth a moment's pains.

Rob Roy had never lingered here,
To these few meagre Vales confined;
But thought how wide the world, the times
How fairly to his mind!

And to his Sword he would have said,
"Do Thou my sovereign will enact
From land to land through half the earth!
Judge thou of law and fact!

"'Tis fit that we should do our part,
Becoming, that mankind should learn
That we are not to be surpassed
In fatherly concern.

"Of old things all are over old,
Of good things none are good enough:—
We'll show that we can help to frame
A world of other stuff.

"I, too, will have my kings that take
From me the sign of life and death:
Kingdoms shall shift about, like clouds,
Obedient to my breath."

And, if the word had been fulfilled,
As *might* have been, then, thought of joy!
France would have had her present Boast,
And we our own Rob Roy!

Oh! say not so; compare them not;
I would not wrong thee, Champion brave!
Would wrong thee nowhere; least of all
Here standing by thy grave.

For Thou, although with some wild thoughts,
Wild Chieftain of a savage Clan!
Hadst this to boast of; thou didst love
The *liberty* of man.

And, had it been thy lot to live
With us who now behold the light,
Thou would'st have nobly stirred thyself,
And battled for the Right.

For thou wert still the poor man's stay,
The poor man's heart, the poor man's hand;
And all the oppressed, who wanted strength,
Had thine at their command.

Bear witness many a pensive sigh
Of thoughtful Herdsman when he strays
Alone upon Loch Veol's heights,
And by Loch Lomond's braes!

And, far and near, through vale and hill,
Are faces that attest the same;
The proud heart flashing through the eyes,
At sound of ROB ROY'S name.

XI

SONNET

COMPOSED AT ——— CASTLE

The Castle here mentioned was Nidpath near Peebles. The person alluded to was the then Duke of Queensbury. The fact was told me by Walter Scott.

DEGENERATE Douglas! oh, the unworthy Lord!
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
And love of havoc, (for with such disease
Fame taxes him,) that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde,
A brotherhood of venerable Trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,
Beggared and outraged!—Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old Trees; and oft with pain
The traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed:
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

XII

YARROW UNVISITED

See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton beginning

"Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!—"

FROM Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"
"Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus;
There's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

"What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."

—Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn
My True-love sighed for sorrow;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,[1]
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow,
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow!

"If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

XIII

THE MATRON OF JEDBOROUGH AND HER HUSBAND

At Jedborough, my companion and I went into private lodgings for a few days; and the following Verses were called forth by the character and domestic situation of our Hostess.

Age! twine thy brows with fresh spring flowers,
And call a train of laughing Hours;
And bid them dance, and bid them sing;
And thou, too, mingle in the ring!
Take to thy heart a new delight;
If not, make merry in despite
That there is One who scorns thy power:—
But dance! for under Jedborough Tower,
A Matron dwells who, though she bears
The weight of more than seventy years,
Lives in the light of youthful glee,
And she will dance and sing with thee.
  Nay! start not at that Figure—there!
Him who is rooted to his chair!
Look at him—look again! for he
Hath long been of thy family.
With legs that move not, if they can,
And useless arms, a trunk of man,
He sits, and with a vacant eye;
A sight to make a stranger sigh!
Deaf, drooping, that is now his doom:
His world is in this single room:
Is this a place for mirthful cheer?
Can merry-making enter here?
  The joyous Woman is the Mate
Of him in that forlorn estate!
He breathes a subterraneous damp;
But bright as Vesper shines her lamp:
He is as mute as Jedborough Tower:
She jocund as it was of yore,
With all its bravery on; in times
When all alive with merry chimes,
Upon a sun-bright morn of May,
It roused the Vale to holiday.
  I praise thee, Matron! and thy due
Is praise, heroic praise, and true!
With admiration I behold
Thy gladness unsubdued and bold:
Thy looks, thy gestures, all present
The picture of a life well spent:
This do I see; and something more;
A strength unthought of heretofore!
Delighted am I for thy sake;
And yet a higher joy partake:
Our Human-nature throws away
Its second twilight, and looks gay;
A land of promise and of pride
Unfolding, wide as life is wide.
  Ah! see her helpless Charge! enclosed
Within himself it seems, composed;
To fear of loss, and hope of gain,
The strife of happiness and pain,
Utterly dead! yet in the guise
Of little infants, when their eyes
Begin to follow to and fro
The persons that before them go,

---

[1] See Hamilton's Ballad as above.

He tracks her motions, quick or slow,
Her buoyant spirit can prevail
Where common cheerfulness would fail;
She strikes upon him with the heat
Of July suns; he feels it sweet;
An animal delight though dim!
'Tis all that now remains for him!
The more I looked, I wondered more—
And, while I scanned them o'er and o'er,
Some inward trouble suddenly
Broke from the Matron's strong black eye—
A remnant of uneasy light,
A flash of something over-bright!
Nor long this mystery did detain
My thoughts;—she told in pensive strain
That she had borne a heavy yoke,
Been stricken by a twofold stroke;
Ill health of body; and had pined
Beneath worse ailments of the mind.
So be it!—but let praise ascend
To Him who is our lord and friend!
Who from disease and suffering
Hath called for thee a second spring;
Repaid thee for that sore distress
By no untimely joyousness;
Which makes of thine a blissful state;
And cheers thy melancholy Mate!

XIV

"FLY, SOME KIND HARBINGER, TO GRASMERE-DALE!"

This was actually composed the last day of our tour between Dalston and Grasmere.

FLY, some kind Harbinger, to Grasmere-dale!
Say that we come, and come by this day's light;
Fly upon swiftest wing round field and height,
But chiefly let one Cottage hear the tale;
There let a mystery of joy prevail,
The kitten frolic, like a gamesome sprite,
And Rover whine, as at a second sight
Of near-approaching good that shall not fail:
And from that Infant's face let joy appear;
Yea, let our Mary's one companion child—
That hath her six weeks' solitude beguiled
With intimations manifold and dear,
While we have wandered over wood and wild—
Smile on his Mother now with bolder cheer.

XV

THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY

A TALE TOLD BY THE FIRE-SIDE, AFTER RETURNING TO THE VALE OF GRASMERE

The story was told me by George Mackereth, for many years parish-clerk of Grasmere. He had been an eye-witness of the occurrence. The vessel in reality was a washing-tub, which the little fellow had met with on the shore of the Loch.

Now we are tired of boisterous joy,
Have romped enough, my little Boy!
Jane hangs her head upon my breast,
And you shall bring your stool and rest;
This corner is your own.

There! take your seat, and let me see
That you can listen quietly:
And, as I promised, I will tell
That strange adventure which befell
A poor blind Highland Boy.

A *Highland* Boy!—why call him so?
Because, my Darlings, ye must know
That, under hills which rise like towers,
Far higher hills than these of ours!
He from his birth had lived.

He ne'er had seen one earthly sight
The sun, the day; the stars, the night;
Or tree, or butterfly, or flower,
Or fish in stream, or bird in bower,
Or woman, man, or child.

And yet he neither drooped nor pined,
Nor had a melancholy mind;
For God took pity on the Boy,
And was his friend; and gave him joy
Of which we nothing know.

His Mother, too, no doubt, above
Her other children him did love:
For, was she here, or was she there,
She thought of him with constant care,
And more than mother's love.

And proud she was of heart, when, clad
In crimson stockings, tartan plaid,
And bonnet with a feather gay,
To Kirk he on the Sabbath day
Went hand in hand with her.

A dog too, had he; not for need,
But one to play with and to feed;
Which would have led him, if bereft
Of company or friends, and left
Without a better guide.

And then the bagpipes he could blow—
And thus from house to house would go;
And all were pleased to hear and see,
For none made sweeter melody
Than did the poor blind Boy.

Yet he had many a restless dream;
Both when he heard the eagles scream,
And when he heard the torrents roar,
And heard the water beat the shore
Near which their cottage stood.

Beside a lake their cottage stood,
Not small like ours, a peaceful flood;
But one of mighty size, and strange;
That, rough or smooth, is full of change,
And stirring in its bed.

For to this lake, by night and day,
The great Sea-water finds its way
Through long, long windings of the hills
And drinks up all the pretty rills
And rivers large and strong;

Then hurries back the road it came—
Returns, on errand still the same;
This did it when the earth was new;
And this for evermore will do
As long as earth shall last.

And, with the coming of the tide,
Come boats and ships that safely ride
Between the woods and lofty rocks;
And to the shepherds with their flocks
Bring tales of distant lands.

And of those tales, whate'er they were,
The blind Boy always had his share;
Whether of mighty towns, or vales
With warmer suns and softer gales,
Or wonders of the Deep.

Yet more it pleased him, more it stirred,
When from the water-side he heard
The shouting, and the jolly cheers;
The bustle of the mariners
In stillness or in storm.

But what do his desires avail?
For He must never handle sail;
Nor mount the mast, nor row, nor float
In sailor's ship, or fisher's boat,
Upon the rocking waves.

His Mother often thought, and said,
What sin would be upon her head
If she should suffer this: "My Son,
Whate'er you do, leave this undone;
The danger is so great."

Thus lived he by Loch Leven's side
Still sounding with the sounding tide,
And heard the billows leap and dance,
Without a shadow of mischance,
Till he was ten years old.

When one day (and now mark me well,
Ye soon shall know how this befell)
He in a vessel of his own,
On the swift flood is hurrying down,
Down to the mighty Sea.

In such a vessel never more
May human creature leave the shore!
If this or that way he should stir,
Woe to the poor blind Mariner!
For death will be his doom.

But say what bears him?—Ye have seen
The Indian's bow, his arrows keen,
Rare beasts, and birds with plumage bright;
Gifts which, for wonder or delight,
Are brought in ships from far.

Such gifts had those seafaring men
Spread round that haven in the glen;
Each hut, perchance, might have its own;
And to the Boy they all were known—
He knew and prized them all.

The rarest was a Turtle-shell
Which he, poor Child, had studied well;
A shell of ample size, and light
As the pearly car of Amphitrite,
That sportive dolphins drew.

And, as a Coracle that braves
On Vaga's breast the fretful waves,
This shell upon the deep would swim,
And gaily lift its fearless brim
Above the tossing surge.

And this the little blind Boy knew:
And he a story strange yet true
Had heard, how in a shell like this
An English Boy, O thought of bliss!
Had stoutly launched from shore;

Launched from the margin of a bay
Among the Indian isles, where lay
His father's ship, and had sailed far—
To join that gallant ship of war,
In his delightful shell.

Our Highland Boy oft visited
The house that held this prize; and, led
By choice or chance, did thither come
One day when no one was at home,
And found the door unbarred.

While there he sate, alone and blind,
That story flashed upon his mind;—
A bold thought roused him, and he took
The shell from out its secret nook,
And bore it on his head.

He launched his vessel,—and in pride
Of spirit, from Loch Leven's side,
Stepped into it—his thoughts all free
As the light breezes that with glee
Sang through the adventurer's hair.

A while he stood upon his feet;
He felt the motion—took his seat;
Still better pleased as more and more
The tide retreated from the shore,
And sucked, and sucked him in.

And there he is in face of Heaven.
How rapidly the Child is driven!
The fourth part of a mile, I ween,
He thus had gone, ere he was seen
By any human eye.

But when he was first seen, oh me
What shrieking and what misery!
For many saw; among the rest
His Mother, she who loved him best,
She saw her poor blind Boy.

But for the child, the sightless Boy,
It is the triumph of his joy!
The bravest traveller in balloon,
Mounting as if to reach the moon,
Was never half so blessed.

And let him, let him go his way,
Alone, and innocent, and gay!
For, if good Angels love to wait
On the forlorn unfortunate,
This Child will take no harm.

But now the passionate lament,
Which from the crowd on shore was sent,
The cries which broke from old and young
In Gaelic, or the English tongue,
Are stifled—all is still.

And quickly with a silent crew
A boat is ready to pursue;
And from the shore their course they take,
And swiftly down the running lake
They follow the blind Boy.

But soon they move with softer pace;
So have ye seen the fowler chase
On Grasmere's clear unruffled breast
A youngling of the wild-duck's nest
With deftly-lifted oar;

Or as the wily sailors crept
To seize (while on the Deep it slept)
The hapless creature which did dwell
Erewhile within the dancing shell,
They steal upon their prey.

With sound the least that can be made,
They follow, more and more afraid,
More cautious as they draw more near;
But in his darkness he can hear,
And guesses their intent.

"*Lei-gha—Lei-gha*"—he then cried out,
"*Lei-gha—Lei-gha*"—with eager shout;
Thus did he cry, and thus did pray,
And what he meant was, "Keep away,
And leave me to myself!"

Alas! and when he felt their hands——
You've often heard of magic wands,
That with a motion overthrow
A palace of the proudest show,
Or melt it into air:

So all his dreams—that inward light
With which his soul had shone so bright—
All vanished;—'twas a heartfelt cross
To him, a heavy, bitter loss,
As he had ever known.

But hark! a gratulating voice,
With which the very hills rejoice:
'Tis from the crowd, who tremblingly
Have watched the event, and now can see
That he is safe at last.

And then, when he was brought to land,
Full sure they were a happy band,
Which, gathering round, did on the banks
Of that great Water give God thanks,
And welcomed the poor Child.

And in the general joy of heart
The blind Boy's little dog took part;
He leapt about, and oft did kiss
His master's hands in sign of bliss,
With sound like lamentation.

But most of all, his Mother dear,
She who had fainted with her fear,
Rejoiced when waking she espies
The Child; when she can trust her eyes,
And touches the blind Boy.

She led him home, and wept amain,
When he was in the house again:
Tears flowed in torrents from her eyes;
She kissed him—how could she chastise?
She was too happy far.

Thus, after he had fondly braved
The perilous Deep, the Boy was saved;
And, though his fancies had been wild,
Yet he was pleased and reconciled
To live in peace on shore.

And in the lonely Highland dell
Still do they keep the Turtle-shell
And long the story will repeat
Of the blind Boy's adventurous feat,
And how he was preserved.

Note.—It is recorded in Dampier's *Voyages*, that a boy, son of the captain of a Man-of-War, seated himself in a Turtle-shell, and floated in it from the shore to his father's ship, which lay at anchor at the distance of half a mile. In deference to the opinion of a Friend, I have substituted such a shell for the less elegant vessel in which my blind Voyager did actually entrust himself to the dangerous current of Loch Leven, as was related to me by an eye-witness.

OCTOBER 1803

One might believe that natural miseries
Had blasted France, and made of it a land
Unfit for men; and that in one great band
Her sons were bursting forth, to dwell at ease.
But 'tis a chosen soil, where sun and breeze
Shed gentle favours: rural works are there,
And ordinary business without care;
Spot rich in all things that can soothe and please!
How piteous then that there should be such dearth
Of knowledge; that whole myriads should unite
To work against themselves such fell despite:
Should come in phrensy and in drunken mirth,
Impatient to put out the only light
Of Liberty that yet remains on earth!

"THERE IS A BONDAGE WORSE, FAR WORSE, TO BEAR"

There is a bondage worse, far worse, to bear
Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall,
Pent in, a Tyrant's solitary Thrall:
'Tis his who walks about in the open air,
One of a Nation who, henceforth, must wear
Their fetters in their souls. For who could be,
Who, even the best, in such condition, free
From self-reproach, reproach that he must share
With Human-nature? Never be it ours
To see the sun how brightly it will shine,
And know that noble feelings, manly powers,
Instead of gathering strength, must droop and pine;
And earth with all her pleasant fruits and flowers
Fade, and participate in man's decline.
1803.

OCTOBER 1803

These times strike monied worldlings with dismay:
Even rich men, brave by nature, taint the air

With words of apprehension and despair:
While tens of thousands, thinking on the affray,
Men unto whom sufficient for the day
And minds not stinted or untilled are given,
Sound, healthy, children of the God of heaven,
Are cheerful as the rising sun in May.
What do we gather hence but firmer faith
That every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath;
That virtue and the faculties within
Are vital,—and that riches are akin
To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death?

"ENGLAND! THE TIME IS COME WHEN THOU SHOULD'ST WEAN"

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou should'st wean
Thy heart from its emasculating food;
The truth should now be better understood;
Old things have been unsettled; we have seen
Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,
If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
Aught good were destined, thou would'st step between.
England! all nations in this charge agree:
But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,
Far—far more abject, is thine Enemy:
Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
Of thy offences be a heavy weight:
Oh grief that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee! 1803.

OCTOBER 1803

WHEN, looking on the present face of things,
I see one Man, of men the meanest too!
Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,
With mighty Nations for his underlings,
The great events with which old story rings
Seem vain and hollow; I find nothing great:
Nothing is left which I can venerate;
So that a doubt almost within me springs
Of Providence, such emptiness at length
Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God!
I measure back the steps which I have trod:
And tremble, seeing whence proceeds the strength
Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts sublime
I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

TO THE MEN OF KENT

OCTOBER 1803

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye men of Kent,
Ye children of a Soil that doth advance
Her haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardiment!
To France be words of invitation sent!
They from their fields can see the countenance
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance
And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
Left single, in bold parley, ye, of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath;
Confirmed the charters that were yours before;—
No parleying now! In Britain is one breath;
We all are with you now from shore to shore:—
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death!

IN THE PASS OF KILLICRANKY

An invasion being expected, October 1803.

SIX thousand veterans practised in war's game,
Tried men, at Killicranky were arrayed
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame;
And Garry, thundering down his mountain-road,
Was stopped, and could not breathe beneath the load
Of the dead bodies.—'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.

O for a single hour of that Dundee,
Who on that day the word of onset gave!
Like conquest would the Men of England see;
And her Foes find a like inglorious grave.

ANTICIPATION, OCTOBER 1803

SHOUT, for a mighty Victory is won!
On British ground the Invaders are laid low;
The breath of Heaven has drifted them like snow,
And left them lying in the silent sun,
Never to rise again!—the work is done.
Come forth, ye old men, now in peaceful show
And greet your sons! drums beat and trumpets blow!
Make merry, wives! ye little children, stun
Your grandame's ears with pleasure of your noise!
Clap, infants, clap your hands! Divine must be
That triumph, when the very worst, the pain,
And even the prospect of our brethren slain,
Hath something in it which the heart enjoys:—
In glory will they sleep and endless sanctity.
1803.

LINES ON THE EXPECTED INVASION, 1803

COME ye—who, if (which Heaven avert!) the Land
Were with herself at strife, would take your stand,
Like gallant Falkland, by the Monarch's side,
And, like Montrose, make Loyalty your pride—
Come ye—who, not less zealous, might display
Banners at enmity with regal sway,
And, like the Pyms and Miltons of that day,
Think that a State would live in sounder health
If Kingship bowed its head to Commonwealth—
Ye too—whom no discreditable fear
Would keep, perhaps with many a fruitless tear,
Uncertain what to choose and how to steer—
And ye—who might mistake for sober sense
And wise reserve the plea of indolence—
Come ye—whate'er your creed—O waken all,
Whate'er your temper, at your Country's call;
Resolving (this a free-born Nation can)
To have one Soul, and perish to a man,
Or save this honoured Land from every Lord
But British reason and the British sword.

THE FARMER OF TILSBURY VALE[1]

The character of this man was described to me, and the incident upon which the verses turn was told me, by Mr. Pool of Nether Stowey, with whom I became acquainted through our common friend, S. T. Coleridge. During my residence at Alfoxden I used to see much of him and had frequent occasions to admire the course of his daily life, especially his conduct to his labourers and poor neighbours: their virtues he carefully encouraged, and weighed their faults in the scales of charity. If I seem in these verses to have treated the weaknesses of the farmer, and his transgression, too tenderly, it may in part be ascribed to my having received the story from one so averse to all harsh judgment. After his death, was found in his escritoir a lock of grey hair carefully preserved, with a notice that it had been cut from the head of his faithful shepherd, who had served him for a length of years. I need scarcely add that he felt for all men as his brothers. He was much beloved by distinguished persons—Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Southey, Sir H. Davy, and many others; and in his own neighbourhood was highly valued as a magistrate, a man of business, and in every other social relation. The latter part of the poem, perhaps, requires some apology as being too much of an echo to the "Reverie of Poor Susan."

'TIS not for the unfeeling, the falsely refined,
The squeamish in taste, and the narrow of mind,
And the small critic wielding his delicate pen,
That I sing of old Adam, the pride of old men.

He dwells in the centre of London's wide Town;

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[1] See Note.

His staff is a sceptre—his grey hairs a crown;
And his bright eyes look brighter, set off by the streak
Of the unfaded rose that still blooms on his cheek.

'Mid the dews, in the sunshine of morn,—'mid the joy
Of the fields, he collected that bloom, when a boy,
That countenance there fashioned, which, spite of a stain
That his life hath received, to the last will remain.

A Farmer he was; and his house far and near
Was the boast of the country for excellent cheer:
How oft have I heard in sweet Tilsbury Vale
Of the silver-rimmed horn whence he dealt his mild ale!

Yet Adam was far as the farthest from ruin,
His fields seemed to know what their Master was doing:
And turnips, and corn-land, and meadow, and lea,
All caught the infection—as generous as he.

Yet Adam prized little the feast and the bowl,—
The fields better suited the ease of his soul:
He strayed through the fields like an indolent wight,
The quiet of nature was Adam's delight.

For Adam was simple in thought; and the poor,
Familiar with him, made an inn of his door:
He gave them the best that he had; or, to say
What less may mislead you, they took it away.

Thus thirty smooth years did he thrive on his farm:
The Genius of plenty preserved him from harm:
At length, what to most is a season of sorrow,
His means are run out,—he must beg, or must borrow.

To the neighbours he went,—all were free with their money;
For his hive had so long been replenished with honey,
That they dreamt not of dearth;—He continued his rounds,
Knocked here—and knocked there, pounds still adding to pounds.

He paid what he could with his ill-gotten pelf,
And something, it might be, reserved for himself:
Then (what is too true) without hinting a word,
Turned his back on the country—and off like a bird.

You lift up your eyes!—but I guess that you frame
A judgment too harsh of the sin and the shame;
In him it was scarcely a business of art,
For this he did all in the *ease* of his heart.

To London—a sad emigration I ween—
With his grey hairs he went from the brook and the green;
And there, with small wealth but his legs and his hands,
As lonely he stood as a crow on the sands.

All trades, as need was, did old Adam assume,—
Served as stable-boy, errand-boy, porter, and groom;
But nature is gracious, necessity kind,
And, in spite of the shame that may lurk in his mind,

He seems ten birthdays younger, is green and is stout;
Twice as fast as before does his blood run about;
You would say that each hair of his beard was alive,
And his fingers are busy as bees in a hive.

For he's not like an Old Man that leisurely goes
About work that he knows, in a track that he knows;
But often his mind is compelled to demur,
And you guess that the more then his body must stir.

In the throng of the town like a stranger is he,
Like one whose own country's far over the sea;
And Nature, while through the great city he hies,
Full ten times a day takes his heart by surprise.

This gives him the fancy of one that is young,
More of soul in his face than of words on his tongue;
Like a maiden of twenty he trembles and sighs,
And tears of fifteen will come into his eyes.

What's a tempest to him, or the dry parching heats?
Yet he watches the clouds that pass over the streets;
With a look of such earnestness often will stand,
You might think he'd twelve reapers at work in the Strand.

Where proud Covent-garden, in desolate hours
Of snow and hoar-frost, spreads her fruits and her flowers,
Old Adam will smile at the pains that have made
Poor winter look fine in such strange masquerade.

'Mid coaches and chariots, a waggon of straw,
Like a magnet, the heart of old Adam can draw;
With a thousand soft pictures his memory will teem,
And his hearing is touched with the sounds of a dream.

Up the Haymarket hill he oft whistles his way,
Thrusts his hands in a waggon, and smells at the hay;
He thinks of the fields he so often hath mown,
And is happy as if the rich freight were his own.

But chiefly to Smithfield he loves to repair,—
If you pass by at morning, you'll meet with him there.
The breath of the cows you may see him inhale,
And his heart all the while is in Tilsbury Vale.

Now farewell, old Adam! when low thou art laid,
May one blade of grass spring up over thy head;
And I hope that thy grave, wheresoever it be,
Will hear the wind sigh through the leaves of a tree.

1803.

TO THE CUCKOO

Composed in the orchard, Town-end, Grasmere.

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee! 1804.

"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT"

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The germ of this poem was four lines composed as a part of the verses on the Highland Girl. Though beginning in this way, it was written from my heart, as is sufficiently obvious.

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light. 1804.

"I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD"

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The Daffodils grew and still grow on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils. 1804.

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET ——

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. This was taken from the case of a poor widow who lived in the town of Penrith. Her sorrow was well known to Mrs. Wordsworth, to my Sister, and, I believe, to the whole town. She kept a shop, and when she saw a stranger passing by, she was in the habit of going out into the street to enquire of him after her son.

I

WHERE art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same
That I may rest; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

II

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

III

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

IV

Ah! little doth the young one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares!
He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less.

V

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought; and, being blind,
Said, "Pride shall help me in my wrong;
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed:" and that is true;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
Think not of me with grief and pain:
I now can see with better eyes;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight!
Chains tie us down by land and sea;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

IX

I look for ghosts; but none will force
Their way to me: 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

X

My apprehensions come in crowds;
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass:
I question things and do not find
One that will answer to my mind;
And all the world appears unkind.

XI

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief:
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end;
I have no other earthly friend! 1804.

THE FORSAKEN

This was an overflow from the "Affliction of Margaret ——," and was excluded as superfluous there, but preserved in the faint hope that it may turn to account by restoring a shy lover to some forsaken damsel. My poetry has been complained of as deficient in interests of this sort,—a charge which the piece beginning, "Lyre! though such power do in thy magic live," will scarcely tend to obviate. The natural imagery of these verses was supplied by frequent, I might say intense, observation of the Rydal torrent. What an animating contrast is the ever-changing aspect of that, and indeed of every one of our mountain brooks, to the monotonous tone and unmitigated fury of such streams among the Alps as are fed all the summer long by glaciers and melting snows. A traveller observing the exquisite purity of the great rivers, such as the Rhine at Geneva, and the Reuss at Lucerne, when they issue out of their respective lakes, might fancy for a moment that some power in nature produced this beautiful change, with a view to make amends for those Alpine sullyings which the waters exhibit near their fountain heads; but, alas! how soon does that purity depart before the influx of tributary waters that have flowed through cultivated plains and the crowded abodes of men.

THE peace which others seek they find;
The heaviest storms not longest last;
Heaven grants even to the guiltiest mind
An amnesty for what is past;
When will my sentence be reversed?
I only pray to know the worst;
And wish as if my heart would burst.

O weary struggle! silent years
Tell seemingly no doubtful tale;
And yet they leave it short, and fears
And hopes are strong and will prevail.
My calmest faith escapes not pain;
And, feeling that the hope is vain,
I think that he will come again. 1804.

REPENTANCE

A PASTORAL BALLAD

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Suggested by the conversation of our next neighbour, Margaret Ashburner.

THE fields which with covetous spirit we sold,
Those beautiful fields, the delight of the day,
Would have brought us more good than a burthen of gold,
Could we but have been as contented as they.

When the troublesome Tempter beset us, said I,
"Let him come, with his purse proudly grasped in his hand;
But, Allan, be true to me, Allan,—we'll die
Before he shall go with an inch of the land!"

There dwelt we, as happy as birds in their bowers;
Unfettered as bees that in gardens abide;
We could do what we liked with the land, it was ours;
And for us the brook murmured that ran by its side.

But now we are strangers, go early or late;
And often, like one overburthened with sin,
With my hand on the latch of the half-opened gate,
I look at the fields, but I cannot go in!

When I walk by the hedge on a bright summer's day,
Or sit in the shade of my grandfather's tree,
A stern face it puts on, as if ready to say,
"What ails you, that you must come creeping to me!"

With our pastures about us, we could not be sad;
Our comfort was near if we ever were crost;
But the comfort, the blessings, and wealth that we had,
We slighted them all,—and our birth-right was lost.

Oh, ill-judging sire of an innocent son
Who must now be a wanderer! but peace to that strain!
Think of evening's repose when our labour was done,
The sabbath's return; and its leisure's soft chain!

And in sickness, if night had been sparing of sleep,
How cheerful, at sunrise, the hill where I stood,
Looking down on the kine, and our treasure of sheep
That besprinkled the field; 'twas like youth in my blood!

Now I cleave to the house, and am dull as a snail;
And, oftentimes, hear the church-bell with a sigh,
That follows the thought—We've no land in the vale,
Save six feet of earth where our forefathers lie! 1804.

THE SEVEN SISTERS;[1]

OR, THE SOLITUDE OF BINNORIE

I

SEVEN Daughters had Lord Archibald,
All children of one mother:
You could not say in one short day
What love they bore each other.
A garland, of seven lilies, wrought!
Seven Sisters that together dwell;
But he, bold Knight as ever fought,
Their Father, took of them no thought,
He loved the wars so well.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

II

Fresh blows the wind, a western wind,
And from the shores of Erin,
Across the wave, a Rover brave
To Binnorie is steering:
Right onward to the Scottish strand
The gallant ship is borne;
The warriors leap upon the land,
And hark! the Leader of the band
Hath blown his bugle horn.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

III

Beside a grotto of their own,
With boughs above them closing,
The Seven are laid, and in the shade
They lie like fawns reposing.
But now, upstarting with affright
At noise of man and steed,
Away they fly to left, to right—
Of your fair household, Father-knight,
Methinks you take small heed!
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

IV

Away the seven fair Campbells fly,
And, over hill and hollow,
With menace proud, and insult loud,
The youthful Rovers follow.
Cried they, "Your Father loves to roam:
Enough for him to find
The empty house when he comes home;
For us your yellow ringlets comb,
For us be fair and kind!"
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

V

Some close behind, some side to side,
Like clouds in stormy weather;
They run, and cry, "Nay, let us die,
And let us die together."
A lake was near; the shore was steep;
There never foot had been;
They ran, and with a desperate leap
Together plunged into the deep,
Nor ever more were seen.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

VI

The stream that flows out of the lake,
As through the glen it rambles,
Repeats a moan o'er moss and stone,
For those seven lovely Campbells.
Seven little Islands, green and bare,
Have risen from out the deep:
The fishers say, those sisters fair,
By faeries all are buried there,
And there together sleep.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie. 1804.

ADDRESS TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER, DORA

ON BEING REMINDED THAT SHE WAS A MONTH OLD THAT DAY, SEPTEMBER 16

——HAST thou then survived—
Mild Offspring of infirm humanity,
Meek Infant! among all forlornest things
The most forlorn—one life of that bright star,
The second glory of the Heavens?—Thou hast,
Already hast survived that great decay,
That transformation through the wide earth felt,
And by all nations. In that Being's sight
From whom the Race of human kind proceed,
A thousand years are but as yesterday;
And one day's narrow circuit is to Him

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[1] See Note.

Not less capacious than a thousand years.
But what is time? What outward glory? neither
A measure is of Thee, whose claims extend
Through "heaven's eternal year."—Yet hail to Thee,
Frail, feeble Monthling!—by that name, methinks,
Thy scanty breathing-time is portioned out
Not idly.—Hadst thou been of Indian birth,
Couched on a casual bed of moss and leaves,
And rudely canopied by leafy boughs,
Or to the churlish elements exposed
On the blank plains,—the coldness of the night,
Or the night's darkness, or its cheerful face
Of beauty, by the changing moon adorned,
Would, with imperious admonition, then
Have scored thine age, and punctually timed
Thine infant history, on the minds of those
Who might have wandered with thee.—Mother's love,
Nor less than mother's love in other breasts,
Will, among us warm-clad and warmly housed,
Do for thee what the finger of the heavens
Doth all too often harshly execute
For thy unblest coevals, amid wilds
Where fancy hath small liberty to grace
The affections, to exalt them or refine;
And the maternal sympathy itself,
Though strong, is, in the main, a joyless tie
Of naked instinct, wound about the heart.
Happier, far happier is thy lot and ours!
Even now—to solemnise thy helpless state,
And to enliven in the mind's regard
Thy passive beauty—parallels have risen,
Resemblances, or contrasts, that connect,
Within the region of a father's thoughts,
Thee and thy mate and sister of the sky.
And first;—thy sinless progress, through a world
By sorrow darkened and by care disturbed,
Apt likeness bears to hers, through gathered clouds,
Moving untouched in silver purity,
And cheering oft-times their reluctant gloom.
Fair are ye both, and both are free from stain:
But thou, how leisurely thou fill'st thy horn
With brightness! leaving her to post along,
And range about, disquieted in change,
And still impatient of the shape she wears.
Once up, once down the hill, one journey, Babe,
That will suffice thee; and it seems that now
Thou hast fore-knowledge that such task is thine;
Thou travellest so contentedly, and sleep'st
In such a heedless peace. Alas! full soon
Hath this conception, grateful to behold,
Changed countenance, like an object sullied o'er
By breathing mist; and thine appears to be
A mournful labour, while to her is given
Hope, and a renovation without end.
—That smile forbids the thought; for on thy face
Smiles are beginning, like the beams of dawn,
To shoot and circulate; smiles have there been seen
Tranquil assurances that Heaven supports
The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers
Thy loneliness: or shall those smiles be called
Feelers of love, put forth as if to explore
This untried world, and to prepare thy way
Through a strait passage intricate and dim?
Such are they; and the same are tokens, signs,
Which, when the appointed season hath arrived,
Joy, as her holiest language, shall adopt;
And Reason's godlike Power be proud to own.
1804.

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES

Seen at Town-end, Grasmere. The elder-bush has long since disappeared: it hung over the wall near the Cottage; and the Kitten continued to leap up, catching the leaves as here described. The infant was Dora.

THAT way look, my Infant, lo!
What a pretty baby-show!
See the Kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Withered leaves—one—two—and three—
From the lofty elder-tree!
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,

Eddying round and round they sink
Softly, slowly: one might think,
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf conveyed
Sylph or Faery hither tending,—
To this lower world descending,
Each invisible and mute,
In his wavering parachute.
——But the Kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!
First at one, and then its fellow
Just as light and just as yellow;
There are many now—now one—
Now they stop and there are none.
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire!
With a tiger-leap half-way
Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again:
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjurer;
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.
Were her antics played in the eye
Of a thousand standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare,
What would little Tabby care
For the plaudits of the crowd?
Over happy to be proud,
Over wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure!
'Tis a pretty baby-treat;
Nor, I deem, for me unmeet;
Here, for neither Babe nor me,
Other play-mate can I see.
Of the countless living things,
That with stir of feet and wings
(In the sun or under shade,
Upon bough or grassy blade)
And with busy revellings,
Chirp and song, and murmurings,
Made this orchard's narrow space,
And this vale so blithe a place;
Multitudes are swept away
Never more to breathe the day:
Some are sleeping; some in bands
Travelled into distant lands;
Others slunk to moor and wood,
Far from human neighbourhood;
And, among the Kinds that keep
With us closer fellowship,
With us openly abide,
All have laid their mirth aside.
Where is he that giddy Sprite,
Blue-cap, with his colours bright,
Who was blest as bird could be,
Feeding in the apple-tree;
Made such wanton spoil and rout,
Turning blossoms inside out;
Hung—head pointing towards the ground—
Fluttered, perched, into a round
Bound himself, and then unbound;
Lithest, gaudiest Harlequin!
Prettiest Tumbler ever seen!
Light of heart and light of limb;
What is now become of Him?
Lambs, that through the mountains went
Frisking, bleating merriment,
When the year was in its prime,
They are sobered by this time.
If you look to vale or hill,
If you listen, all is still,
Save a little neighbouring rill,
That from out the rocky ground
Strikes a solitary sound.
Vainly glitter hill and plain,
And the air is calm in vain;
Vainly Morning spreads the lure
Of a sky serene and pure;
Creature none can she decoy
Into open sign of joy:
Is it that they have a fear
Of the dreary season near?
Or that other pleasures be
Sweeter even than gaiety?
Yet, whate'er enjoyments dwell
In the impenetrable cell
Of the silent heart which Nature
Furnishes to every creature;
Whatsoe'er we feel and know
Too sedate for outward show,
Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty Kitten! from thy freaks,—
Spreads with such a living grace
O'er my little Dora's face;
Yes, the sight so stirs and charms
Thee, Baby, laughing in my arms,
That almost I could repine
That your transports are not mine,
That I do not wholly fare
Even as ye do, thoughtless pair!
And I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason,
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladsomeness.

—Pleased by any random toy;
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss;
Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought,
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with Life's falling Leaf.

1804.

TO THE SPADE OF A FRIEND

(AN AGRICULTURIST)

COMPOSED WHILE WE WERE LABOURING TOGETHER IN HIS PLEASURE-GROUND

This person was Thomas Wilkinson, a quaker by religious profession; by natural constitution of mind, or shall I venture to say, by God's grace, he was something better. He had inherited a small estate, and built a house upon it near Yanwath, upon the banks of the Emont. I have heard him say that his heart used to beat, in his boyhood, when he heard the sound of a drum and fife. Nevertheless, the spirit of enterprise in him confined itself to tilling his ground, and conquering such obstacles as stood in the way of its fertility. Persons of his religious persuasion do now, in a far greater degree than formerly, attach themselves to trade and commerce. He kept the old track. As represented in this poem, he employed his leisure hours in shaping pleasant walks by the side of his beloved river, where he also built something between a hermitage and a summer-house, attaching to it inscriptions after the manner of Shenstone at his Leasowes. He used to travel from time to time, partly from love of nature, and partly with religious friends in the service of humanity. His admiration of genius in every department did him much honour. Through his connection with the family in which Edmund Burke was educated, he became acquainted with that great man, who used to receive him with great kindness and consideration; and many times have I heard Wilkinson speak of those interesting interviews. He was honoured also by the friendship of Elizabeth Smith, and of Thomas Clarkson and his excellent wife, and was much esteemed by Lord and Lady Lonsdale, and every member of that family. Among his verses (he wrote many) are some worthy of preservation—one little poem in particular upon disturbing, by prying curiosity, a bird while hatching her young in his garden. The latter part of this innocent and good man's life was melancholy. He became blind, and also poor by becoming surety for some of his relations. He was a bachelor. He bore, as I have often witnessed, his calamities with unfailing resignation. I will only add that, while working in one of his fields, he unearthed a stone of considerable size, then another, then two more, and, observing that they had been placed in order as if forming the segment of a circle, he proceeded carefully to uncover the soil, and brought into view a beautiful Druid's temple of perfect though small dimensions. In order to make his farm more compact, he exchanged this field for another; and, I am sorry to add, the new proprietor destroyed this interesting relic of remote ages for some vulgar purpose.

SPADE! with which Wilkinson hath tilled his lands,
And shaped these pleasant walks by Emont's side,
Thou art a tool of honour in my hands;
I press thee, through the yielding soil, with pride.

Rare master has it been thy lot to know;
Long hast Thou served a man to reason true;
Whose life combines the best of high and low,
The labouring many and the resting few;

Health, meekness, ardour, quietness secure,
And industry of body and of mind;
And elegant enjoyments, that are pure
As nature is; too pure to be refined.

Here often hast Thou heard the Poet sing
In concord with his river murmuring by;
Or in some silent field, while timid spring
Is yet uncheered by other minstrelsy.

Who shall inherit Thee when death has laid
Low in the darksome cell thine own dear lord?
That man will have a trophy, humble Spade!
A trophy nobler than a conqueror's sword.

If he be one that feels, with skill to part
False praise from true, or, greater from the less,
Thee will he welcome to his hand and heart,
Thou monument of peaceful happiness!

He will not dread with Thee a toilsome day—
Thee his loved servant, his inspiring mate!
And, when thou art past service, worn away,
No dull oblivious nook shall hide thy fate.

His thrift thy uselessness will never scorn;
An *heir-loom* in his cottage wilt thou be:—
High will he hang thee up, well pleased to adorn
His rustic chimney with the last of Thee!
1804.

THE SMALL CELANDINE

There is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain;
And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distrest,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a Thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I passed
And recognised it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold:
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.

"The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay;
Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue."
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.

To be a Prodigal's Favourite—then, worse truth,
A Miser's Pensioner—behold our lot!
O Man, that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not!
1804.

AT APPLETHWAITE, NEAR KESWICK

This place was presented to me by Sir George Beaumont with a view to the erection of a house upon it, for the sake of being near to Coleridge, then living, and likely to remain, at Greta Hall near Keswick. The *severe* necessities that prevented this arose from his domestic situation. This little property, with a considerable addition that still leaves it very small, lies beautifully upon the banks of a rill that gurgles down the side of Skiddaw, and the orchard and other parts of the grounds command a magnificent prospect of Derwent Water, and of the mountains of Borrowdale and Newlands. Many years ago I gave the place to my daughter.

Beaumont! it was thy wish that I should rear
A seemly Cottage in this sunny Dell,
On favoured ground, thy gift, where I might dwell
In neighbourhood with One to me most dear,
That undivided we from year to year
Might work in our high Calling—a bright hope
To which our fancies, mingling, gave free scope
Till checked by some necessities severe.
And should these slacken, honoured Beaumont! still
Even then we may perhaps in vain implore
Leave of our fate thy wishes to fulfil.
Whether this boon be granted us or not,
Old Skiddaw will look down upon the Spot
With pride, the Muses love it evermore.
1804.

TO THE SUPREME BEING

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,

That of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works thou art the seed,
That quickens only where thou say'st it may:
Unless Thou show to us thine own true way
No man can find it: Father! Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of thee,
And sound thy praises everlastingly.

1804.

ODE TO DUTY

This ode is on the model of Gray's Ode to Adversity, which is copied from Horace's Ode to Fortune. Many and many a time have I been twitted by my wife and sister for having forgotten this dedication of myself to the stern lawgiver. Transgressor indeed I have been, from hour to hour, from day to day: I would fain hope, however, not more flagrantly or in a worse way than most of my tuneful brethren. But these last words are in a wrong strain. We should be rigorous to ourselves and forbearing, if not indulgent, to others, and, if we make comparisons at all, it ought to be with those who have morally excelled us.

"Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eò perductus, ut non tantum rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè facere non possim."

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

1805.

TO A SKY-LARK

UP with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,

Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky.

Joyous as morning
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou would'st be loth
To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.
1805.

FIDELITY

The young man whose death gave occasion to this poem was named Charles Gough, and had come early in the spring to Paterdale for the sake of angling. While attempting to cross over Helvellyn to Grasmere he slipped from a steep part of the rock where the ice was not thawed, and perished. His body was discovered as is told in this poem. Walter Scott heard of the accident, and both he and I, without either of us knowing that the other had taken up the subject, each wrote a poem in admiration of the dog's fidelity. His contains a most beautiful stanza:—

"How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber,
When the wind waved his garment how oft didst thou start."

I will add that the sentiment in the last four lines of the last stanza in my verses was uttered by a shepherd with such exactness, that a traveller, who afterwards reported his account in print, was induced to question the man whether he had read them, which he had not.

A BARKING sound the Shepherd hears,
A cry as of a dog or fox;
He halts—and searches with his eyes
Among the scattered rocks:
And now at distance can discern
A stirring in a brake of fern;
And instantly a dog is seen,
Glancing through that covert green.

The Dog is not of mountain breed;
Its motions, too, are wild and shy;
With something, as the Shepherd thinks,
Unusual in its cry:
Nor is there any one in sight
All round, in hollow or on height;
Nor shout, nor whistle strikes his ear;
What is the creature doing here?

It was a cove, a huge recess,
That keeps, till June, December's snow;
A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn[1] below!
Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
Remote from public road or dwelling,
Pathway, or cultivated land;
From trace of human foot or hand.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
The crags repeat the raven's croak,
In symphony austere;
Thither the rainbow comes—the cloud—
And mists that spread the flying shroud;
And sunbeams; and the sounding blast,
That, if it could, would hurry past;
But that enormous barrier holds it fast.

Not free from boding thoughts, a while
The Shepherd stood; then makes his way
O'er rocks and stones, following the Dog
As quickly as he may;
Nor far had gone before he found
A human skeleton on the ground;
The appalled Discoverer with a sigh
Looks round, to learn the history.

From those abrupt and perilous rocks
The Man had fallen, that place of fear!
At length upon the Shepherd's mind
It breaks, and all is clear:
He instantly recalled the name,
And who he was, and whence he came;

---

[1] Tarn is a *small* Mere or Lake, mostly high up in the mountains.

Remembered, too, the very day
On which the Traveller passed this way.

But hear a wonder, for whose sake
This lamentable tale I tell!
A lasting monument of words
This wonder merits well.
The Dog, which still was hovering nigh,
Repeating the same timid cry,
This Dog, had been through three months' space
A dweller in that savage place.

Yes, proof was plain that, since the day
When this ill-fated Traveller died,
The Dog had watched about the spot,
Or by his master's side:
How nourished here through such long time
He knows, who gave that love sublime;
And gave that strength of feeling, great
Above all human estimate! 1805.

INCIDENT

CHARACTERISTIC OF A FAVOURITE DOG

This Dog I knew well. It belonged to Mrs. Wordsworth's brother, Mr. Thomas Hutchinson, who then lived at Sockburn on the Tees, a beautiful retired situation where I used to visit him and his sisters before my marriage. My sister and I spent many months there after our return from Germany in 1799.

On his morning rounds the Master
Goes to learn how all things fare;
Searches pasture after pasture,
Sheep and cattle eyes with care;
And, for silence or for talk,
He hath comrades in his walk;
Four dogs, each pair of different breed,
Distinguished two for scent, and two for speed.

See a hare before him started!
—Off they fly in earnest chase;
Every dog is eager-hearted,
All the four are in the race:
And the hare whom they pursue,
Knows from instinct what to do;
Her hope is near: no turn she makes;
But, like an arrow, to the river takes.

Deep the river was, and crusted
Thinly by a one night's frost;
But the nimble Hare hath trusted
To the ice, and safely crost;
She hath crost, and without heed
All are following at full speed,
When, lo! the ice, so thinly spread,
Breaks—and the greyhound, DART, is over-head!

Better fate have PRINCE and SWALLOW—
See them cleaving to the sport!
MUSIC has no heart to follow,
Little MUSIC, she stops short.
She hath neither wish nor heart,
Hers is now another part:
A loving creature she, and brave!
And fondly strives her struggling friend to save.

From the brink her paws she stretches,
Very hands as you would say!
And afflicting moans she fetches,
As he breaks the ice away.
For herself she hath no fears,—
Him alone she sees and hears,—
Makes efforts with complainings; nor gives o'er
Until her fellow sinks to re-appear no more.
1805.

TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF THE SAME DOG

LIE here, without a record of thy worth,
Beneath a covering of the common earth!
It is not from unwillingness to praise,
Or want of love, that here no Stone we raise;
More thou deserv'st; but *this* man gives to man,
Brother to brother, *this* is all we can.
Yet they to whom thy virtues made thee dear
Shall find thee through all changes of the year:
This Oak points out thy grave; the silent tree
Will gladly stand a monument of thee.
We grieved for thee, and wished thy end were past;
And willingly have laid thee here at last:
For thou hadst lived till everything that cheers
In thee had yielded to the weight of years;
Extreme old age had wasted thee away,
And left thee but a glimmering of the day;

Thy ears were deaf, and feeble were thy knees,—
I saw thee stagger in the summer breeze,
Too weak to stand against its sportive breath,
And ready for the gentlest stroke of death.
It came, and we were glad; yet tears were shed;
Both man and woman wept when thou wert dead;
Not only for a thousand thoughts that were,
Old household thoughts, in which thou hadst thy share;
But for some precious boons vouchsafed to thee,
Found scarcely anywhere in like degree!
For love, that comes wherever life and sense
Are given by God, in thee was most intense;
A chain of heart, a feeling of the mind,
A tender sympathy, which did thee bind
Not only to us Men, but to thy Kind:
Yea, for thy fellow-brutes in thee we saw
A soul of love, love's intellectual law:—
Hence, if we wept, it was not done in shame;
Our tears from passion and from reason came,
And, therefore, shalt thou be an honoured name! 1805.

TO THE DAISY

SWEET Flower! belike one day to have
A place upon thy Poet's grave,
I welcome thee once more:
But He, who was on land, at sea,
My Brother, too, in loving thee,
Although he loved more silently,
Sleeps by his native shore.

Ah! hopeful, hopeful was the day
When to that Ship he bent his way,
To govern and to guide:
His wish was gained: a little time
Would bring him back in manhood's prime
And free for life, these hills to climb;
With all his wants supplied.

And full of hope day followed day
While that stout Ship at anchor lay
Beside the shores of Wight;
The May had then made all things green;
And, floating there, in pomp serene,
That Ship was goodly to be seen,
His pride and his delight!

Yet then, when called ashore, he sought
The tender peace of rural thought:
In more than happy mood
To your abodes, bright daisy Flowers!
He then would steal at leisure hours,
And loved you glittering in your bowers
A starry multitude.

But hark the word!—the ship is gone;—
Returns from her long course:—anon
Sets sail:—in season due,
Once more on English earth they stand:
But, when a third time from the land
They parted, sorrow was at hand
For Him and for his crew.

Ill-fated Vessel!—ghastly shock!
—At length delivered from the rock,
The deep she hath regained;
And through the stormy night they steer;
Labouring for life, in hope and fear,
To reach a safer shore—how near,
Yet not to be attained!

"Silence!" the brave Commander cried;
To that calm word a shriek replied,
It was the last death-shriek.
—A few (my soul oft sees that sight)
Survive upon the tall mast's height;
But one dear remnant of the night—
For Him in vain I seek.

Six weeks beneath the moving sea
He lay in slumber quietly;
Unforced by wind or wave
To quit the Ship for which he died,
(All claims of duty satisfied;)
And there they found him at her side;
And bore him to the grave.

Vain service! yet not vainly done
For this, if other end were none,
That He, who had been cast
Upon a way of life unmeet
For such a gentle Soul and sweet,
Should find an undisturbed retreat
Near what he loved, at last—

That neighbourhood of grove and field
To Him a resting-place should yield,

A meek man and a brave!
The birds shall sing and ocean make
A mournful murmur for *his* sake;
And Thou, sweet Flower, shalt sleep and wake
Upon his senseless grave. 1805.

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A STORM, PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

Sir George Beaumont painted two pictures of this subject, one of which he gave to Mrs. Wordsworth, saying she ought to have it; but Lady Beaumont interfered, and after Sir George's death she gave it to Sir Uvedale Price, in whose house at Foxley I have seen it.

I WAS thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made:
And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A stedfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more;
I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate Work!—yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

1805.

ELEGIAC VERSES

IN MEMORY OF MY BROTHER, JOHN WORDSWORTH,

COMMANDER OF THE E.I. COMPANY'S SHIP THE EARL OF ABERGAVENNY, IN WHICH HE PERISHED BY CALAMITOUS SHIPWRECK, FEB. 6, 1805.

Composed near the Mountain track that leads from Grasmere through Grisdale Hawes, where it descends towards Paterdale.

"Here did we stop; and here looked round,
While each into himself descends."

The point is two or three yards below the outlet of Grisdale tarn, on a foot-road by which a horse may pass to Paterdale—a ridge of Helvellyn on the left, and the summit of Fairfield on the right.

I

THE Sheep-boy whistled loud, and lo!
That instant, startled by the shock,
The Buzzard mounted from the rock
Deliberate and slow:
Lord of the air, he took his flight;
Oh! could he on that woeful night
Have lent his wing, my Brother dear,
For one poor moment's space to Thee,
And all who struggled with the Sea,
When safety was so near.

II

Thus in the weakness of my heart
I spoke (but let that pang be still)
When rising from the rock at will,
I saw the Bird depart.
And let me calmly bless the Power
That meets me in this unknown Flower.
Affecting type of him I mourn!
With calmness suffer and believe,
And grieve, and know that I must grieve,
Not cheerless, though forlorn.

III

Here did we stop; and here looked round
While each into himself descends,
For that last thought of parting Friends
That is not to be found.
Hidden was Grasmere Vale from sight,
Our home and his, his heart's delight,
His quiet heart's selected home.
But time before him melts away,
And he hath feeling of a day
Of blessedness to come.

IV

Full soon in sorrow did I weep,
Taught that the mutual hope was dust,
In sorrow, but for higher trust,
How miserably deep!
All vanished in a single word,
A breath, a sound, and scarcely heard:
Sea—Ship—drowned—Shipwreck—so it came,
The meek, the brave, the good, was gone;
He who had been our living John
Was nothing but a name.

V

That was indeed a parting! oh,
Glad am I, glad that it is past;
For there were some on whom it cast
Unutterable woe.
But they as well as I have gains;—
From many a humble source, to pains
Like these, there comes a mild release;
Even here I feel it, even this Plant
Is in its beauty ministrant
To comfort and to peace.

VI

He would have loved thy modest grace,
Meek Flower! To Him I would have said,
"It grows upon its native bed
Beside our Parting-place;
There, cleaving to the ground, it lies
With multitude of purple eyes,
Spangling a cushion green like moss;
But we will see it, joyful tide!
Some day, to see it in its pride,
The mountain will we cross."

VII

—Brother and Friend, if verse of mine
Have power to make thy virtues known,
Here let a monumental Stone
Stand—sacred as a Shrine;

And to the few who pass this way,
Traveller or Shepherd, let it say,
Long as these mighty rocks endure,—
Oh do not Thou too fondly brood,
Although deserving of all good,
On any earthly hope, however pure![1]
1805.

"WHEN TO THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE BUSY WORLD."

The grove still exists, but the plantation has been walled in, and is not so accessible as when my brother John wore the path in the manner here described. The grove was a favourite haunt with us all while we lived at Town-end.

When, to the attractions of the busy world,
Preferring studious leisure, I had chosen
A habitation in this peaceful Vale,
Sharp season followed of continual storm
In deepest winter; and, from week to week,
Pathway, and lane, and public road, were clogged
With frequent showers of snow. Upon a hill
At a short distance from my cottage, stands
A stately Fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for I found, beneath the roof
Of that perennial shade, a cloistral place
Of refuge, with an unincumbered floor.
Here, in safe covert, on the shallow snow,
And, sometimes, on a speck of visible earth,
The redbreast near me hopped; nor was I loth
To sympathise with vulgar coppice birds
That, for protection from the nipping blast,
Hither repaired.—A single beech-tree grew
Within this grove of firs! and, on the fork
Of that one beech, appeared a thrush's nest;
A last year's nest, conspicuously built
At such small elevation from the ground
As gave sure sign that they, who in that house
Of nature and of love had made their home
Amid the fir-trees, all the summer long
Dwelt in a tranquil spot. And oftentimes,
A few sheep, stragglers from some mountain-flock,
Would watch my motions with suspicious stare,
From the remotest outskirts of the grove,—
Some nook where they had made their final stand,
Huddling together from two fears—the fear
Of me and of the storm. Full many an hour
Here did I lose. But in this grove the trees
Had been so thickly planted, and had thriven
In such perplexed and intricate array;
That vainly did I seek, beneath their stems
A length of open space, where to and fro
My feet might move without concern or care;
And, baffled thus, though earth from day to day
Was fettered, and the air by storm disturbed,
I ceased the shelter to frequent,—and prized,
Less than I wished to prize, that calm recess.
The snows dissolved, and genial Spring returned
To clothe the fields with verdure. Other haunts
Meanwhile were mine; till, one bright April day,
By chance retiring from the glare of noon
To this forsaken covert, there I found
A hoary pathway traced between the trees,
And winding on with such an easy line
Along a natural opening, that I stood
Much wondering how I could have sought in vain
For what was now so obvious. To abide,
For an allotted interval of ease,
Under my cottage-roof, had gladly come
From the wild sea a cherished Visitant;
And with the sight of this same path—begun,
Begun and ended, in the shady grove,
Pleasant conviction flashed upon my mind
That, to this opportune recess allured,
He had surveyed it with a finer eye,
A heart more wakeful; and had worn the track
By pacing here, unwearied and alone,
In that habitual restlessness of foot
That haunts the Sailor measuring o'er and o'er
His short domain upon the vessel's deck,

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[1] The plant alluded to is the Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis* of Linnæus). See Note.

While she pursues her course through the dreary sea.
When thou hadst quitted Esthwaite's pleasant shore,
And taken thy first leave of those green hills
And rocks that were the play-ground of thy youth,
Year followed year, my Brother! and we two,
Conversing not, knew little in what mould
Each other's mind was fashioned; and at length,
When once again we met in Grasmere Vale,
Between us there was little other bond
Than common feelings of fraternal love.
But thou, a Schoolboy, to the sea hadst carried
Undying recollections! Nature there
Was with thee; she, who loved us both, she still
Was with thee; and even so didst thou become
A *silent* Poet; from the solitude
Of the vast sea didst bring a watchful heart
Still couchant, an inevitable ear,
And an eye practised like a blind man's touch.
—Back to the joyless Ocean thou art gone;
Nor from this vestige of thy musing hours
Could I withhold thy honoured name,—and now
I love the fir-grove with a perfect love.
Thither do I withdraw when cloudless suns
Shine hot, or wind blows troublesome and strong;
And there I sit at evening, when the steep
Of Silver-how, and Grasmere's peaceful lake,
And one green island, gleam between the stems
Of the dark firs, a visionary scene!
And, while I gaze upon the spectacle
Of clouded splendour, on this dream-like sight
Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee,
My Brother, and on all which thou hast lost.
Nor seldom, if I rightly guess, while Thou,
Muttering the verses which I muttered first
Among the mountains, through the midnight watch
Art pacing thoughtfully the vessel's deck
In some far region, here, while o'er my head,
At every impulse of the moving breeze,
The fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like sound,
Alone I tread this path;—for aught I know,
Timing my steps to thine; and, with a store
Of undistinguishable sympathies,
Mingling most earnest wishes for the day
When we, and others whom we love, shall meet
A second time, in Grasmere's happy Vale.
1805.

NOTE.—This wish was not granted; the lamented Person not long after perished by shipwreck, in discharge of his duty as Commander of the Honourable East India Company's Vessel, the Earl of Abergavenny.

LOUISA

AFTER ACCOMPANYING HER ON A MOUNTAIN EXCURSION

Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

I MET Louisa in the shade,
And, having seen that lovely Maid,
Why should I fear to say
That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
And down the rocks can leap along
Like rivulets in May?

She loves her fire, her cottage-home;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak;
And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.

Take all that's mine "beneath the moon,"
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls. 1805.

TO A YOUNG LADY

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY

Composed at the same time and on the same view as "I met Louisa in the shade": indeed they were designed to make one piece.

Dear Child of Nature, let them rail!
—There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbour and a hold;
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see
Thy own heart-stirring days, and be
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd boy,
And treading among flowers of joy
Which at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave;
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave. 1805.

VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA[1]

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Faithfully narrated, though with the omission of many pathetic circumstances, from the mouth of a French lady, who had been an eye-and-ear-witness of all that was done and said. Many long years after, I was told that Dupligne was then a monk in the Convent of La Trappe.

The following tale was written as an Episode, in a work from which its length may perhaps exclude it. The facts are true; no invention as to these has been exercised, as none was needed.

O happy time of youthful lovers (thus
My story may begin) O balmy time,
In which a love-knot on a lady's brow
Is fairer than the fairest star in heaven!
To such inheritance of blessed fancy
(Fancy that sports more desperately with minds
Than ever fortune hath been known to do)
The high-born Vaudracour was brought, by years
Whose progress had a little overstepped
His stripling prime. A town of small repute,
Among the vine-clad mountains of Auvergne,
Was the Youth's birth-place. There he wooed a Maid
Who heard the heart-felt music of his suit
With answering vows. Plebeian was the stock,
Plebeian, though ingenuous, the stock,
From which her graces and her honours sprung:
And hence the father of the enamoured Youth,
With haughty indignation, spurned the thought
Of such alliance.—From their cradles up,
With but a step between their several homes,
Twins had they been in pleasure; after strife
And petty quarrels, had grown fond again;
Each other's advocate, each other's stay;
And, in their happiest moments, not content,
If more divided than a sportive pair
Of sea-fowl, conscious both that they are hovering
Within the eddy of a common blast,
Or hidden only by the concave depth
Of neighbouring billows from each other's sight.
  Thus, not without concurrence of an age
Unknown to memory, was an earnest given
By ready nature for a life of love,
For endless constancy, and placid truth;
But whatsoe'er of such rare treasure lay
Reserved, had fate permitted, for support
Of their maturer years, his present mind
Was under fascination;—he beheld
A vision, and adored the thing he saw.
Arabian fiction never filled the world
With half the wonders that were wrought for him.
Earth breathed in one great presence of the spring;
Life turned the meanest of her implements,
Before his eyes, to price above all gold;
The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine;
Her chamber-window did surpass in glory
The portals of the dawn; all paradise
Could, by the simple opening of a door,
Let itself in upon him:—pathways, walks,
Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit sank,
Surcharged, within him, overblest to move
Beneath a sun that wakes a weary world
To its dull round of ordinary cares;
A man too happy for mortality!
  So passed the time, till whether through effect

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[1] The first four lines occur in The Prelude, book ix. p. 306.

Of some unguarded moment that dissolved
Virtuous restraint—ah, speak it, think it, not!
Deem rather that the fervent Youth, who saw
So many bars between his present state
And the dear haven where he wished to be
In honourable wedlock with his Love,
Was in his judgment tempted to decline
To perilous weakness, and entrust his cause
To nature for a happy end of all;
Deem that by such fond hope the Youth was swayed,
And bear with their transgression, when I add
That Julia, wanting yet the name of wife,
Carried about her for a secret grief
The promise of a mother.
                                        To conceal
The threatened shame, the parents of the Maid
Found means to hurry her away by night,
And unforewarned, that in some distant spot
She might remain shrouded in privacy,
Until the babe was born. When morning came
The Lover, thus bereft, stung with his loss,
And all uncertain whither he should turn,
Chafed like a wild beast in the toils; but soon
Discovering traces of the fugitives,
Their steps he followed to the Maid's retreat.
Easily may the sequel be divined—
Walks to and fro—watchings at every hour;
And the fair Captive, who, whene'er she may,
Is busy at her casement as the swallow
Fluttering its pinions, almost within reach,
About the pendent nest, did thus espy
Her Lover!—thence a stolen interview,
Accomplished under friendly shade of night.
   I pass the raptures of the pair;—such theme
Is, by innumerable poets, touched
In more delightful verse than skill of mine
Could fashion; chiefly by that darling bard
Who told of Juliet and her Romeo,
And of the lark's note heard before its time,
And of the streaks that laced the severing clouds
In the unrelenting east.—Through all her courts
The vacant city slept; the busy winds,
That keep no certain intervals of rest,
Moved not; meanwhile the galaxy displayed
Her fires, that like mysterious pulses beat
Aloft;—momentous but uneasy bliss!
To their full hearts the universe seemed hung
On that brief meeting's slender filament!
   They parted; and the generous Vaudracour
Reached speedily the native threshold, bent
On making (so the Lovers had agreed)
A sacrifice of birthright to attain
A final portion from his father's hand;
Which granted, Bride and Bridegroom then would flee
To some remote and solitary place,
Shady as night, and beautiful as heaven,
Where they may live, with no one to behold
Their happiness, or to disturb their love.
But *now* of this no whisper; not the less,
If ever an obtrusive word were dropped
Touching the matter of his passion, still,
In his stern father's hearing, Vaudracour
Persisted openly that death alone
Should abrogate his human privilege
Divine, of swearing everlasting truth,
Upon the altar, to the Maid he loved.
   "You shall be baffled in your mad intent
If there be justice in the court of France,"
Muttered the Father.—From these words the Youth
Conceived a terror; and, by night or day,
Stirred nowhere without weapons, that full soon
Found dreadful provocation: for at night
When to his chamber he retired, attempt
Was made to seize him by three armèd men,
Acting, in furtherance of the father's will,
Under a private signet of the State.
One the rash Youth's ungovernable hand
Slew, and as quickly to a second gave
A perilous wound—he shuddered to behold
The breathless corse; then peacefully resigned
His person to the law, was lodged in prison,

And wore the fetters of a criminal.
Have you observed a tuft of wingèd seed
That, from the dandelion's naked stalk,
Mounted aloft, is suffered not to use
Its natural gifts for purposes of rest,
Driven by the autumnal whirlwind to and fro
Through the wide element? or have you marked
The heavier substance of a leaf-clad bough,
Within the vortex of a foaming flood,
Tormented? by such aid you may conceive
The perturbation that ensued;—ah, no!
Desperate the Maid—the Youth is stained with blood;
Unmatchable on earth is their disquiet!
Yet as the troubled seed and tortured bough
Is Man, subjected to despotic sway.
For him, by private influence with the Court,
Was pardon gained, and liberty procured;
But not without exaction of a pledge,
Which liberty and love dispersed in air.
He flew to her from whom they would divide him—
He clove to her who could not give him peace—
Yea, his first word of greeting was,—"All right
Is gone from me; my lately-towering hopes,
To the least fibre of their lowest root,
Are withered; thou no longer canst be mine,
I thine—the conscience-stricken must not woo
The unruffled Innocent,—I see thy face,
Behold thee, and my misery is complete!"
"One, are we not?" exclaimed the Maiden—"One,
For innocence and youth, for weal and woe?"
Then with the father's name she coupled words
Of vehement indignation; but the Youth
Checked her with filial meekness; for no thought
Uncharitable crossed his mind, no sense
Of hasty anger rising in the eclipse
Of true domestic loyalty, did e'er
Find place within his bosom.—Once again
The persevering wedge of tyranny
Achieved their separation: and once more
Were they united,—to be yet again
Disparted, pitiable lot! But here
A portion of the tale may well be left
In silence, though my memory could add
Much how the Youth, in scanty space of time,
Was traversed from without; much, too, of thoughts
That occupied his days in solitude
Under privation and restraint; and what,
Through dark and shapeless fear of things to come,
And what, through strong compunction for the past,
He suffered—breaking down in heart and mind!
Doomed to a third and last captivity,
His freedom he recovered on the eve
Of Julia's travail. When the babe was born,
Its presence tempted him to cherish schemes
Of future happiness. "You shall return,
Julia," said he, "and to your father's house
Go with the child.—You have been wretched; yet
The silver shower, whose reckless burthen weighs
Too heavily upon the lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.
Malice, beholding you, will melt away.
Go!—'tis a town where both of us were born;
None will reproach you, for our truth is known;
And if, amid those once-bright bowers, our fate
Remain unpitied, pity is not in man.
With ornaments—the prettiest, nature yields
Or art can fashion, shall you deck our boy,
And feed his countenance with your own sweet looks
Till no one can resist him.—Now, even now,
I see him sporting on the sunny lawn;
My father from the window sees him too;
Startled, as if some new-created thing
Enriched the earth, or Faery of the woods
Bounded before him;—but the unweeting Child
Shall by his beauty win his grandsire's heart
So that it shall be softened, and our loves
End happily, as they began!"
These gleams

Appeared but seldom; oftener was he seen
Propping a pale and melancholy face
Upon the Mother's bosom; resting thus
His head upon one breast, while from the other
The Babe was drawing in its quiet food.
—That pillow is no longer to be thine,
Fond Youth! that mournful solace now must pass
Into the list of things that cannot be!
Unwedded Julia, terror-smitten, hears
The sentence, by her mother's lip pronounced,
That dooms her to a convent.—Who shall tell,
Who dares report, the tidings to the lord
Of her affections? so they blindly asked
Who knew not to what quiet depths a weight
Of agony had pressed the Sufferer down:
The word, by others dreaded, he can hear
Composed and silent, without visible sign
Of even the least emotion. Noting this,
When the impatient object of his love
Upbraided him with slackness, he returned
No answer, only took the mother's hand
And kissed it; seemingly devoid of pain,
Or care, that what so tenderly he pressed,
Was a dependant on the obdurate heart
Of one who came to disunite their lives
For ever—sad alternative! preferred,
By the unbending Parents of the Maid,
To secret 'spousals meanly disavowed.
—So be it!

In the city he remained
A season after Julia had withdrawn
To those religious walls. He, too, departs—
Who with him?—even the senseless Little-one.
With that sole charge he passed the city-gates,
For the last time, attendant by the side
Of a close chair, a litter, or sedan,
In which the Babe was carried. To a hill,
That rose a brief league distant from the town,
The dwellers in that house where he had lodged
Accompanied his steps, by anxious love
Impelled;—they parted from him there, and stood
Watching below till he had disappeared
On the hill top. His eyes he scarcely took,
Throughout that journey, from the vehicle
(Slow-moving ark of all his hopes!) that veiled
The tender infant: and, at every inn,
And under every hospitable tree
At which the bearers halted or reposed,
Laid him with timid care upon his knees,
And looked, as mothers ne'er were known to look,
Upon the nursling which his arms embraced.

This was the manner in which Vaudracour
Departed with his infant; and thus reached
His father's house, where to the innocent child
Admittance was denied. The young man spake
No word of indignation or reproof,
But of his father begged, a last request,
That a retreat might be assigned to him
Where in forgotten quiet he might dwell,
With such allowance as his wants required;
For wishes he had none. To a lodge that stood
Deep in a forest, with leave given, at the age
Of four-and-twenty summers he withdrew;
And thither took with him his motherless Babe,
And one domestic for their common needs,
An aged woman. It consoled him here
To attend upon the orphan, and perform
Obsequious service to the precious child,
Which, after a short time, by some mistake
Or indiscretion of the Father, died.—
The Tale I follow to its last recess
Of suffering or of peace, I know not which:
Theirs be the blame who caused the woe, not mine!

From this time forth he never shared a smile
With mortal creature. An Inhabitant
Of that same town, in which the pair had left
So lively a remembrance of their griefs,
By chance of business, coming within reach
Of his retirement, to the forest lodge
Repaired, but only found the matron there,
Who told him that his pains were thrown away,
For that her Master never uttered word
To living thing—not even to her.—Behold!
While they were speaking, Vaudracour approached;

But, seeing some one near, as on the latch
Of the garden-gate his hand was laid, he shrunk—
And, like a shadow, glided out of view.
Shocked at his savage aspect, from the place
The visitor retired.
                              Thus lived the Youth
Cut off from all intelligence with man,
And shunning even the light of common day;
Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through France
Full speedily resounded, public hope,
Or personal memory of his own deep wrongs,
Rouse him: but in those solitary shades
His days he wasted, an imbecile mind!
                                                  1805.

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT

BY MY SISTER

Suggested to her while beside my sleeping children.

THE days are cold, the nights are long,
The north-wind sings a doleful song;
Then hush again upon my breast;
All merry things are now at rest,
        Save thee, my pretty Love!

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
The crickets long have ceased their mirth;
There's nothing stirring in the house
Save one *wee*, hungry, nibbling mouse,
        Then why so busy thou?

Nay! start not at that sparkling light;
'Tis but the moon that shines so bright
On the window pane bedropped with rain:
Then, little Darling! sleep again,
        And wake when it is day.
                                                  1805.

THE WAGGONER[1]

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The characters and story from fact.

> In Cairo's crowded streets
> The impatient Merchant, wondering, waits in vain,
> And Mecca saddens at the long delay.
>
> THOMSON.

TO
CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

When I sent you, a few weeks ago, the tale of Peter Bell, you asked "why THE WAGGONER was not added?"—To say the truth—from the higher tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of passion aimed at in the former, I apprehended this little Piece could not accompany it without disadvantage. In the year 1806, if I am not mistaken, THE WAGGONER was read to you in manuscript, and, as you have remembered it for so long a time, I am the more encouraged to hope, that, since the localities on which the Poem partly depends did not prevent its being interesting to you, it may prove acceptable to others. Being therefore in some measure the cause of its present appearance, you must allow me the gratification of inscribing it to you; in acknowledgment of the pleasure I have derived from your Writings, and of the high esteem with which

I am very truly yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, May 20, 1819.

CANTO FIRST

'TIS spent—this burning day of June!
Soft darkness o'er its latest gleams is stealing;
The buzzing dor-hawk, round and round, is wheeling,[1]—
That solitary bird
Is all that can be heard
In silence deeper far than that of deepest noon!
   Confiding Glow-worms, 'tis a night
Propitious to your earth-born light!
But, where the scattered stars are seen
In hazy straits the clouds between,
Each, in his station twinkling not,
Seems changed into a pallid spot.
The mountains against heaven's grave weight
Rise up, and grow to wondrous height.
The air, as in a lion's den,
Is close and hot;—and now and then
Comes a tired and sultry breeze
With a haunting and a panting,
Like the stifling of disease;
But the dews allay the heat,
And the silence makes it sweet.

---

[1] See Note.

Hush, there is some one on the stir!
'Tis Benjamin the Waggoner;
Who long hath trod this toilsome way,
Companion of the night and day.
That far-off tinkling's drowsy cheer,
Mixed with a faint yet grating sound
In a moment lost and found,
The Wain announces—by whose side
Along the banks of Rydal Mere
He paces on, a trusty Guide,—
Listen! you can scarcely hear!
Hither he his course is bending;—
Now he leaves the lower ground,
And up the craggy hill ascending
Many a stop and stay he makes,
Many a breathing-fit he takes;—
Steep the way and wearisome,
Yet all the while his whip is dumb!
The Horses have worked with right good-will,
And so have gained the top of the hill;
He was patient, they were strong,
And now they smoothly glide along,
Recovering breath, and pleased to win
The praises of mild Benjamin.
Heaven shield him from mishap and snare!
But why so early with this prayer?—
Is it for threatenings in the sky?
Or for some other danger nigh?
No; none is near him yet, though he
Be one of much infirmity;
For at the bottom of the brow,
Where once the Dove and Olive-bough
Offered a greeting of good ale
To all who entered Grasmere Vale;
And called on him who must depart
To leave it with a jovial heart;
There, where the Dove and Olive-bough
Once hung, a Poet harbours now,
A simple water-drinking Bard;
Why need our Hero then (though frail
His best resolves) be on his guard?
He marches by, secure and bold;
Yet while he thinks on times of old,
It seems that all looks wondrous cold;
He shrugs his shoulders, shakes his head,
And, for the honest folk within,
It is a doubt with Benjamin
Whether they be alive or dead!
Here is no danger,—none at all!
Beyond his wish he walks secure;
But pass a mile—and *then* for trial,—
Then for the pride of self-denial;
If he resist that tempting door,
Which with such friendly voice will call;
If he resist those casement panes,
And that bright gleam which thence will fall
Upon his Leaders' bells and manes,
Inviting him with cheerful lure:
For still, though all be dark elsewhere,
Some shining notice will be *there*,
Of open house and ready fare.
The place to Benjamin right well
Is known, and by as strong a spell
As used to be that sign of love
And hope—the Olive-bough and Dove;
He knows it to his cost, good Man!
Who does not know the famous Swan?
Object uncouth! and yet our boast,
For it was painted by the Host;
His own conceit the figure planned,
'Twas coloured all by his own hand;
And that frail Child of thirsty clay,
Of whom I sing this rustic lay,
Could tell with self-dissatisfaction
Quaint stories of the bird's attraction![1]
Well! that is past—and in despite
Of open door and shining light.
And now the conqueror essays
The long ascent of Dunmail-raise;
And with his team is gentle here
As when he clomb from Rydal Mere;
His whip they do not dread—his voice
They only hear it to rejoice.
To stand or go is at *their* pleasure;
Their efforts and their time they measure
By generous pride within the breast;
And, while they strain, and while they rest,
He thus pursues his thoughts at leisure.
Now am I fairly safe to-night—
And with proud cause my heart is light:
I trespassed lately worse than ever—
But Heaven has blest a good endeavour;
And, to my soul's content, I find
The evil One is left behind.
Yes, let my master fume and fret,
Here am I—with my horses yet!
My jolly team, he finds that ye
Will work for nobody but me!
Full proof of this the Country gained;
It knows how ye were vexed and strained,
And forced unworthy stripes to bear,
When trusted to another's care.
Here was it—on this rugged slope,
Which now ye climb with heart and hope,

---

[1] This rude piece of self-taught art (such is the progress of refinement) has been supplanted by a professional production.

I saw you, between rage and fear,
Plunge, and fling back a spiteful ear,
And ever more and more confused,
As ye were more and more abused:
As chance would have it, passing by
I saw you in that jeopardy:
A word from me was like a charm;
Ye pulled together with one mind;
And your huge burthen, safe from harm,
Moved like a vessel in the wind!
—Yes, without me, up hills so high
'Tis vain to strive for mastery.
Then grieve not, jolly team! though tough
The road we travel, steep, and rough;
Though Rydal-heights and Dunmail-raise,
And all their fellow banks and braes,
Full often make you stretch and strain,
And halt for breath and halt again,
Yet to their sturdiness 'tis owing
That side by side we still are going!
  While Benjamin in earnest mood
His meditations thus pursued,
A storm, which had been smothered long,
Was growing inwardly more strong;
And, in its struggles to get free,
Was busily employed as he.
The thunder had begun to growl—
He heard not, too intent of soul;
The air was now without a breath—
He marked not that 'twas still as death.
But soon large rain-drops on his head
Fell with the weight of drops of lead;—
He starts—and takes, at the admonition,
A sage survey of his condition.
The road is black before his eyes,
Glimmering faintly where it lies;
Black is the sky—and every hill,
Up to the sky, is blacker still—
Sky, hill, and dale, one dismal room,
Hung round and overhung with gloom;
Save that above a single height
Is to be seen a lurid light,
Above Helm-crag[1]—a streak half dead,
A burning of portentous red;
And near that lurid light, full well
The ASTROLOGER, sage Sidrophel,
Where at his desk and book he sits,
Puzzling aloft his curious wits;
He whose domain is held in common
With no one but the ANCIENT WOMAN,
Cowering beside her rifted cell,
As if intent on magic spell;—
Dread pair, that, spite of wind and weather,
Still sit upon Helm-crag together!
  The ASTROLOGER was not unseen
By solitary Benjamin;
But total darkness came anon,
And he and everything was gone:
And suddenly a ruffling breeze,
(That would have rocked the sounding trees
Had aught of sylvan growth been there)
Swept through the Hollow long and bare:
The rain rushed down—the road was battered,
As with the force of billows shattered;
The horses are dismayed, nor know
Whether they should stand or go;
And Benjamin is groping near them
Sees nothing, and can scarcely hear them.
He is astounded,—wonder not,—
With such a charge in such a spot;
Astounded in the mountain gap
With thunder-peals, clap after clap,
Close-treading on the silent flashes—
And somewhere, as he thinks, by crashes
Among the rocks; with weight of rain,
And sullen motions long and slow,
That to a dreary distance go—
Till, breaking in upon the dying strain,
A rending o'er his head begins the fray again.
  Meanwhile, uncertain what to do,
And oftentimes compelled to halt,
The horses cautiously pursue
Their way, without mishap or fault;
And now have reached that pile of stones,
Heaped over brave King Dunmail's bones;
His who had once supreme command,
Last king of rocky Cumberland;
His bones, and those of all his Power
Slain here in a disastrous hour!
  When, passing through this narrow strait,
Stony, and dark, and desolate,
Benjamin can faintly hear
A voice that comes from some one near,
A female voice:—"Whoe'er you be,
Stop," it exclaimed, "and pity me!"
And, less in pity than in wonder,
Amid the darkness and the thunder,
The Waggoner, with prompt command,
Summons his horses to a stand.
  While, with increasing agitation,
The Woman urged her supplication,
In rueful words, with sobs between—
The voice of tears that fell unseen;

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[1] A mountain of Grasmere, the broken summit of which presents two figures, full as distinctly shaped as that of the famous Cobbler near Arroquhar in Scotland.

There came a flash—a startling glare,
And all Seat-Sandal was laid bare!
'Tis not a time for nice suggestion,
And Benjamin, without a question,
Taking her for some way-worn rover,
Said, "Mount, and get you under cover!"
Another voice, in tone as hoarse
As a swoln brook with rugged course,
Cried out, "Good brother, why so fast?
I've had a glimpse of you—*avast!*
Or, since it suits you to be civil,
Take her at once—for good and evil!"
"It is my Husband," softly said
The Woman, as if half afraid:
By this time she was snug within,
Through help of honest Benjamin;
She and her Babe, which to her breast
With thankfulness the Mother pressed;
And now the same strong voice more near
Said cordially, "My Friend, what cheer?
Rough doings these! as God's my judge,
The sky owes somebody a grudge!
We've had in half an hour or less
A twelvemonth's terror and distress!"
Then Benjamin entreats the Man
Would mount, too, quickly as he can:
The Sailor—Sailor now no more,
But such he had been heretofore—
To courteous Benjamin replied,
"Go you your way, and mind not me;
For I must have, whate'er betide,
My Ass and fifty things beside,—
Go, and I'll follow speedily!"
The Waggon moves—and with its load
Descends along the sloping road;
And the rough Sailor instantly
Turns to a little tent hard by:
For when, at closing-in of day,
The family had come that way,
Green pasture and the soft warm air
Tempted them to settle there.—
Green is the grass for beast to graze,
Around the stones of Dunmail-raise!
The Sailor gathers up his bed,
Takes down the canvas overhead;
And, after farewell to the place,
A parting word—though not of grace,
Pursues, with Ass and all his store,
The way the Waggon went before.

CANTO SECOND

If Wytheburn's modest House of prayer,
As lowly as the lowliest dwelling,
Had, with its belfry's humble stock,
A little pair that hang in air,
Been mistress also of a clock,
(And one, too, not in crazy plight)
Twelve strokes that clock would have been telling
Under the brow of old Helvellyn—
Its bead-roll of midnight,
Then, when the Hero of my tale
Was passing by, and, down the vale
(The vale now silent, hushed I ween
As if a storm had never been)
Proceeding with a mind at ease;
While the old Familiar of the seas,
Intent to use his utmost haste,
Gained ground upon the Waggon fast,
And gives another lusty cheer;
For spite of rumbling of the wheels,
A welcome greeting he can hear;—
It is a fiddle in its glee
Dinning from the Cherry Tree!
Thence the sound—the light is there—
As Benjamin is now aware,
Who, to his inward thoughts confined,
Had almost reached the festive door,
When, startled by the Sailor's roar,
He hears a sound and sees a light,
And in a moment calls to mind
That 'tis the village Merry-Night![1]
Although before in no dejection,
At this insidious recollection
His heart with sudden joy is filled,—
His ears are by the music thrilled,
His eyes take pleasure in the road
Glittering before him bright and broad
And Benjamin is wet and cold,
And there are reasons manifold
That make the good, tow'rds which he's yearning,
Look fairly like a lawful earning.
Nor has thought time to come and go,
To vibrate between yes and no;
For, cries the Sailor, "Glorious chance
That blew us hither!—let him dance,
Who can or will!—my honest soul,
Our treat shall be a friendly bowl!"
He draws him to the door—"Come in,
Come, come," cries he to Benjamin!
And Benjamin—ah, woe is me!
Gave the word—the horses heard
And halted, though reluctantly.

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[1] A term well known in the North of England, and applied to rural Festivals where young persons meet in the evening for the purpose of dancing.

"Blithe souls and lightsome hearts have we,
Feasting at the CHERRY TREE!"
This was the outside proclamation,
This was the inside salutation;
What bustling—jostling—high and low!
A universal overflow!
What tankards foaming from the tap!
What store of cakes in every lap!
What thumping—stumping—overhead!
The thunder had not been more busy:
With such a stir you would have said,
This little place may well be dizzy!
'Tis who can dance with greatest vigour—
'Tis what can be most prompt and eager;
As if it heard the fiddle's call,
The pewter clatters on the wall;
The very bacon shows its feeling,
Swinging from the smoky ceiling!
A steaming bowl, a blazing fire,
What greater good can heart desire?
'Twere worth a wise man's while to try
The utmost anger of the sky:
To *seek* for thoughts of a gloomy cast,
If such the bright amends at last.
Now should you say I judge amiss,
The CHERRY TREE shows proof of this;
For soon of all the happy there,
Our Travellers are the happiest pair;
All care with Benjamin is gone—
A Cæsar past the Rubicon!
He thinks not of his long, long strife;—
The Sailor, Man by nature gay,
Hath no resolves to throw away;
And he hath now forgot his Wife,
Hath quite forgotten her—or may be
Thinks her the luckiest soul on earth,
Within that warm and peaceful berth,
Under cover,
Terror over,
Sleeping by her sleeping Baby.
With bowl that sped from hand to hand,
The gladdest of the gladsome band,
Amid their own delight and fun,
They hear—when every dance is done,
When every whirling bout is o'er—
The fiddle's *squeak* [1]—that call to bliss,
Ever followed by a kiss;
They envy not the happy lot,
But enjoy their own the more!
While thus our jocund Travellers fare,
Up springs the Sailor from his chair—
Limps (for I might have told before
That he was lame) across the floor—
Is gone—returns—and with a prize;
With what?—a Ship of lusty size;
A gallant stately Man-of-war,
Fixed on a smoothly-sliding car.
Surprise to all, but most surprise
To Benjamin, who rubs his eyes,
Not knowing that he had befriended
A Man so gloriously attended!
"This," cries the Sailor, "a Third-rate is—
Stand back, and you shall see her gratis!
This was the Flag-ship at the Nile,
The Vanguard—you may smirk and smile,
But, pretty Maid, if you look near,
You'll find you've much in little here!
A nobler ship did never swim,
And you shall see her in full trim:
I'll set, my friends, to do you honour,
Set every inch of sail upon her."
So said, so done; and masts, sails, yards,
He names them all; and interlards
His speech with uncouth terms of art,
Accomplished in the showman's part;
And then, as from a sudden check,
Cries out—"'Tis there, the quarter-deck
On which brave Admiral Nelson stood—
A sight that would have roused your blood!
One eye he had, which, bright as ten,
Burned like a fire among his men;
Let this be land, and that be sea,
Here lay the French—and *thus* came we!"
Hushed was by this the fiddle's sound,
The dancers all were gathered round,
And, such the stillness of the house,
You might have heard a nibbling mouse;
While, borrowing helps where'er he may,
The Sailor through the story runs
Of ships to ships and guns to guns;
And does his utmost to display
The dismal conflict, and the might
And terror of that marvellous night!
"A bowl, a bowl of double measure,"
Cries Benjamin, "a draught of length,
To Nelson, England's pride and treasure
Her bulwark and her tower of strength!"
When Benjamin had seized the bowl,
The mastiff, from beneath the waggon,
Where he lay, watchful as a dragon,
Rattled his chain;—'twas all in vain,
For Benjamin, triumphant soul!
He heard the monitory growl;

---

[1] At the close of each strathspey, or jig, a particular note from the fiddle summons the Rustic to the agreeable duty of saluting his partner.

Heard—and in opposition quaffed
A deep, determined, desperate draught!
Nor did the battered Tar forget,
Or flinch from what he deemed his debt:
Then, like a hero crowned with laurel,
Back to her place the ship he led;
Wheeled her back in full apparel;
And so, flag flying at mast head,
Re-yoked her to the Ass:—anon,
Cries Benjamin, "We must be gone.
Thus, after two hours' hearty stay,
Again behold them on their way!

CANTO THIRD

Right gladly had the horses stirred,
When they the wished-for greeting heard,
The whip's loud notice from the door,
That they were free to move once more.
You think, those doings must have bred
In them disheartening doubts and dread;
No, not a horse of all the eight,
Although it be a moonless night,
Fears either for himself or freight;
For this they know (and let it hide,
In part, the offences of their guide)
That Benjamin, with clouded brains,
Is worth the best with all their pains;
And, if they had a prayer to make,
The prayer would be that they may take
With him whatever comes in course,
The better fortune or the worse;
That no one else may have business near them,
And, drunk or sober, he may steer them.
  So, forth in dauntless mood they fare,
And with them goes the guardian pair.
  Now, heroes, for the true commotion,
The triumph of your late devotion
Can aught on earth impede delight,
Still mounting to a higher height;
And higher still—a greedy flight!
Can any low-born care pursue her,
Can any mortal clog come to her? [1]
No notion have they—not a thought,
That is from joyless regions brought!
And, while they coast the silent lake,
Their inspiration I partake;
Share their empyreal spirits—yea,
With their enraptured vision, see—
O fancy—what a jubilee!
What shifting pictures—clad in gleams
Of colour bright as feverish dreams!
Earth, spangled sky, and lake serene,
Involved and restless all—a scene
Pregnant with mutual exaltation,
Rich change, and multiplied creation!
This sight to me the Muse imparts;—
And then, what kindness in their hearts!
What tears of rapture, what vow-making,
Profound entreaties, and hand-shaking!
What solemn, vacant, interlacing,
As if they'd fall asleep embracing!
Then, in the turbulence of glee,
And in the excess of amity,
Says Benjamin, "That Ass of thine,
He spoils thy sport, and hinders mine:
If he were tethered to the waggon,
He'd drag as well what he is dragging,
And we, as brother should with brother,
Might trudge it alongside each other!"
  Forthwith, obedient to command,
The horses made a quiet stand;
And to the waggon's skirts was tied
The Creature, by the Mastiff's side,
The Mastiff wondering, and perplext
With dread of what will happen next;
And thinking it but sorry cheer,
To have such company so near!
  This new arrangement made, the Wain
Through the still night proceeds again;
No Moon hath risen her light to lend;
But indistinctly may be kenned
The Vanguard, following close behind,
Sails spread, as if to catch the wind!
  "Thy wife and child are snug and warm,
Thy ship will travel without harm;
I like," said Benjamin, "her shape and stature:
And this of mine—this bulky creature
Of which I have the steering—this,
Seen fairly, is not much amiss!
We want your streamers, friend, you know;
But, altogether as we go,
We make a kind of handsome show!
Among these hills, from first to last,
We've weathered many a furious blast;
Hard passage forcing on, with head
Against the storm, and canvas spread.
I hate a boaster; but to thee
Will say't, who know'st both land and sea,
The unluckiest hulk that stems the brine
Is hardly worse beset than mine,
When cross-winds on her quarter beat;
And, fairly lifted from my feet,
I stagger onward—heaven knows how;
But not so pleasantly as now:

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[1] See Note.

Poor pilot I, by snows confounded,
And many a foundrous pit surrounded!
Yet here we are, by night and day
Grinding through rough and smooth our way;
Through foul and fair our task fulfilling;
And long shall be so yet—God willing!"
"Ay," said the Tar, "through fair and foul—
But save us from yon screeching owl!"
That instant was begun a fray
Which called their thoughts another way:
The mastiff, ill-conditioned carl!
What must he do but growl and snarl,
Still more and more dissatisfied
With the meek comrade at his side!
Till, not incensed though put to proof,
The Ass, uplifting a hind hoof,
Salutes the Mastiff on the head;
And so were better manners bred,
And all was calmed and quieted.
"Yon screech-owl," says the Sailor, turning
Back to his former cause of mourning,
"Yon owl!—pray God that all be well!
'Tis worse than any funeral bell;
As sure as I've the gift of sight,
We shall be meeting ghosts to-night!"
—Said Benjamin, "This whip shall lay
A thousand, if they cross our way.
I know that Wanton's noisy station,
I know him and his occupation;
The jolly bird hath learned his cheer
Upon the banks of Windermere;
Where a tribe of them make merry,
Mocking the Man that keeps the ferry;
Hallooing from an open throat,
Like travellers shouting for a boat.
—The tricks he learned at Windermere
This vagrant owl is playing here—
That is the worst of his employment:
He's at the top of his enjoyment!"
This explanation stilled the alarm,
Cured the foreboder like a charm;
This, and the manner, and the voice,
Summoned the Sailor to rejoice;
His heart is up—he fears no evil
From life or death, from man or devil;
He wheels—and, making many stops,
Brandished his crutch against the mountain tops;
And, while he talked of blows and scars,
Benjamin, among the stars,
Beheld a dancing—and a glancing;
Such retreating and advancing
As, I ween, was never seen
In bloodiest battle since the days of Mars!

CANTO FOURTH

Thus they, with freaks of proud delight,
Beguile the remnant of the night;
And many a snatch of jovial song
Regales them as they wind along;
While to the music, from on high,
The echoes make a glad reply.—
But the sage Muse the revel heeds
No farther than her story needs;
Nor will she servilely attend
The loitering journey to its end.
—Blithe spirits of her own impel
The Muse, who scents the morning air,
To take of this transported pair
A brief and unreproved farewell;
To quit the slow-paced waggon's side,
And wander down yon hawthorn dell,
With murmuring Greta for her guide.
—There doth she ken the awful form
Of Raven-crag—black as a storm—
Glimmering through the twilight pale;
And Ghimmer-crag,[1] his tall twin brother,
Each peering forth to meet the other:—
And, while she roves through St. John's Vale,
Along the smooth unpathwayed plain,
By sheep-track or through cottage lane,
Where no disturbance comes to intrude
Upon the pensive solitude,
Her unsuspecting eye, perchance,
With the rude shepherd's favoured glance,
Beholds the faeries in array,
Whose party-coloured garments gay
The silent company betray:
Red, green, and blue; a moment's sight!
For Skiddaw-top with rosy light
Is touched—and all the band take flight.
—Fly also, Muse! and from the dell
Mount to the ridge of Nathdale Fell;
Thence, look thou forth o'er wood and lawn
Hoar with the frost-like dews of dawn;
Across yon meadowy bottom look,
Where close fogs hide their parent brook;
And see, beyond that hamlet small,
The ruined towers of Threlkeld-hall,
Lurking in a double shade,
By trees and lingering twilight made!

[1] The crag of the ewe lamb.

There, at Blencathara's rugged feet,
Sir Lancelot gave a safe retreat
To noble Clifford; from annoy
Concealed the persecuted boy,
Well pleased in rustic garb to feed
His flock, and pipe on shepherd's reed
Among this multitude of hills,
Crags, woodlands, waterfalls, and rills;
Which soon the morning shall enfold,
From east to west, in ample vest
Of massy gloom and radiance bold.
  The mists, that o'er the streamlet's bed
Hung low, begin to rise and spread;
Even while I speak, their skirts of grey
Are smitten by a silver ray;
And lo!—up Castrigg's naked steep
(Where, smoothly urged, the vapours sweep
Along—and scatter and divide,
Like fleecy clouds self-multiplied)
The stately waggon is ascending,
With faithful Benjamin attending,
Apparent now beside his team—
Now lost amid a glittering steam:
And with him goes his Sailor-friend,
By this time near their journey's end;
And, after their high-minded riot,
Sickening into thoughtful quiet;
As if the morning's pleasant hour
Had for their joys a killing power.
And, sooth, for Benjamin a vein
Is opened of still deeper pain
As if his heart by notes were stung
From out the lowly hedge-rows flung;
As if the Warbler lost in light
Reproved his soarings of the night,
In strains of rapture pure and holy
Upbraided his distempered folly.
  Drooping is he, his step is dull;
But the horses stretch and pull;
With increasing vigour climb,
Eager to repair lost time;
Whether, by their own desert,
Knowing what cause there is for shame,
They are labouring to avert
As much as may be of the blame,
Which, they foresee, must soon alight
Upon *his* head, whom, in despite
Of all his failings, they love best;
Whether for him they are distrest,
Or, by length of fasting roused,
Are impatient to be housed:
Up against the hill they strain
Tugging at the iron chain,
Tugging all with might and main,
Last and foremost, every horse
To the utmost of his force!
And the smoke and respiration,
Rising like an exhalation,
Blend with the mist—a moving shroud
To form, an undissolving cloud;
Which, with slant ray, the merry sun
Takes delight to play upon.
Never golden-haired Apollo,
Pleased some favourite chief to follow
Through accidents of peace or war,
In a perilous moment threw
Around the object of his care
Veil of such celestial hue;
Interposed so bright a screen—
Him and his enemies between!
  Alas! what boots it?—who can hide,
When the malicious Fates are bent
On working out an ill intent?
Can destiny be turned aside?
No—sad progress of my story!
Benjamin, this outward glory
Cannot shield thee from thy Master,
Who from Keswick has pricked forth,
Sour and surly as the north;
And, in fear of some disaster,
Comes to give what help he may,
And to hear what thou canst say;
If, as needs he must forebode,
Thou hast been loitering on the road!
His fears, his doubts, may now take flight—
The wished-for object is in sight;
Yet, trust the Muse, it rather hath
Stirred him up to livelier wrath;
Which he stifles, moody man!
With all the patience that he can;
To the end that, at your meeting,
He may give thee decent greeting.
  There he is—resolved to stop,
Till the waggon gains the top;
But stop he cannot—must advance:
Him Benjamin, with lucky glance,
Espies—and instantly is ready,
Self-collected, poised, and steady:
And, to be the better seen,
Issues from his radiant shroud,
From his close-attending cloud,
With careless air and open mien.
Erect his port, and firm his going;
So struts yon cock that now is crowing;
And the morning light in grace
Strikes upon his lifted face,
Hurrying the pallid hue away
That might his trespasses betray.

But what can all avail to clear him,
Or what need of explanation,
Parley or interrogation?
For the Master sees, alas!
That unhappy Figure near him,
Limping o'er the dewy grass,
Where the road it fringes, sweet,
Soft and cool to way-worn feet;
And, O indignity! an Ass,
By his noble Mastiff's side,
Tethered to the waggon's tail:
And the ship, in all her pride,
Following after in full sail!
Not to speak of babe and mother;
Who, contented with each other,
And snug as birds in leafy arbour,
Find, within, a blessed harbour!
With eager eyes the Master pries;
Looks in and out, and through and through;
Says nothing—till at last he spies
A wound upon the Mastiff's head,
A wound, where plainly might be read
What feats an Ass's hoof can do!
But drop the rest:—this aggravation,
This complicated provocation,
A hoard of grievances unsealed;
All past forgiveness it repealed;
And thus, and through distempered blood
On both sides, Benjamin the good,
The patient, and the tender-hearted,
Was from his team and waggon parted;
When duty of that day was o'er,
Laid down his whip—and served no more.—
Nor could the waggon long survive,
Which Benjamin had ceased to drive:
It lingered on;—guide after guide
Ambitiously the office tried;
But each unmanageable hill
Called for *his* patience and *his* skill;—
And sure it is, that through this night,
And what the morning brought to light,
Two losses had we to sustain,
We lost both WAGGONER and WAIN!

Accept, O Friend, for praise or blame,
The gift of this adventurous song;
A record which I dared to frame,
Though timid scruples checked me long;
They checked me—and I left the theme
Untouched—in spite of many a gleam
Of fancy which thereon was shed,
Like pleasant sunbeams shifting still
Upon the side of a distant hill:
But Nature might not be gainsaid;
For what I have and what I miss
I sing of these;—it makes my bliss!
Nor is it I who play the part,
But a shy spirit in my heart,
That comes and goes—will sometimes leap
From hiding-places ten years deep;
Or haunts me with familiar face,
Returning, like a ghost unlaid,
Until the debt I owe be paid.
Forgive me, then; for I had been
On friendly terms with this Machine:
In him, while he was wont to trace
Our roads, through many a long year's space,
A living almanack had we;
We had a speaking diary,
That in this uneventful place
Gave to the days a mark and name
By which we knew them when they came.
—Yes, I, and all about me here,
Through all the changes of the year,
Had seen him through the mountains go,
In pomp of mist or pomp of snow,
Majestically huge and slow:
Or, with a milder grace adorning
The landscape of a summer's morning;
While Grasmere smoothed her liquid plain
The moving image to detain;
And mighty Fairfield, with a chime
Of echoes, to his march kept time;
When little other business stirred,
And little other sound was heard;
In that delicious hour of balm,
Stillness, solitude, and calm,
While yet the valley is arrayed,
On this side with a sober shade;
On that is prodigally bright—
Crag, lawn, and wood—with rosy light.
—But most of all, thou Lordly Wain!
I wish to have thee here again,
When windows flap and chimney roars,
And all is dismal out of doors;
And, sitting by my fire, I see
Eight sorry carts, no less a train;
Unworthy successors of thee,
Come straggling through the wind and rain!
And oft, as they pass slowly on,
Beneath my windows, one by one,
See, perched upon the naked height
The summit of a cumbrous freight,
A single traveller—and there
Another; then perhaps a pair—
The lame, the sickly, and the old;
Men, women, heartless with the cold;

And babes in wet and starveling plight:
Which once, be weather as it might,
Had still a nest within a nest,
Thy shelter—and their mother's breast!
Then most of all, then far the most,
Do I regret what we have lost;
Am grieved for that unhappy sin
Which robbed us of good Benjamin;
And of his stately Charge, which none
Could keep alive when He was gone!

1805.

FRENCH REVOLUTION

AS IT APPEARED TO ENTHUSIASTS AT ITS COMMENCEMENT.[1] REPRINTED FROM "THE FRIEND"[2]

An extract from the long poem on my own poetical education. It was first published by Coleridge in his "Friend," which is the reason of its having had a place in every edition of my poems since.

Oh! pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood
Upon our side, we who were strong in love!
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!—Oh! times,
In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways
Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance!
When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights,
When most intent on making of herself
A prime Enchantress—to assist the work,
Which then was going forward in her name!
Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,
The beauty wore of promise, that which sets
(As at some moment might not be unfelt
Among the bowers of paradise itself)
The budding rose above the rose full blown.
What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt away!
They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
The playfellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and strength
Their ministers,—who in lordly wise had stirred
Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found there
As if they had within some lurking right
To wield it;—they, too, who, of gentle mood,
Had watched all gentle motions, and to these
Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild,
And in the region of their peaceful selves;—
Now was it that both found, the meek and lofty
Did both find, helpers to their heart's desire,
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish;
Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia, subterranean fields,
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us,—the place where in the end
We find our happiness, or not at all!

1805.

THE PRELUDE

OR, GROWTH OF A POET'S MIND;

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEM

ADVERTISEMENT

The following Poem was commenced in the beginning of the year 1799, and completed in the summer of 1805.

The design and occasion of the work are described by the Author in his Preface to the Excursion, first published in 1814, where he thus speaks:—

"Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such an employment.

"As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them.

"That work, addressed to a dear friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it, was a determination to compose a philosophical Poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society, and to be entitled the 'Recluse'; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.

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[1] This and the Extract, p. 112, and the first Piece of this Class, are from the [then] unpublished Poem of which some account is given in the Preface to the Excursion.

[2] Prelude, book xi. p. 315.

"The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the Ante-chapel has to the body of a Gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor pieces, which have been long before the public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive reader to have such connection with the main work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices."

Such was the Author's language in the year 1814.

It will thence be seen, that the present Poem was intended to be introductory to the RECLUSE, and that the RECLUSE, if completed, would have consisted of Three Parts. Of these, the Second Part alone, viz. the EXCURSION, was finished, and given to the world by the Author.

The First Book of the First Part of the RECLUSE still remains in manuscript;[1] but the Third Part was only planned. The materials of which it would have been formed have, however, been incorporated, for the most part, in the Author's other Publications, written subsequently to the EXCURSION.

The Friend, to whom the present Poem is addressed, was the late SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, who was resident in Malta, for the restoration of his health, when the greater part of it was composed.

Mr. Coleridge read a considerable portion of the Poem while he was abroad; and his feelings, on hearing it recited by the Author (after his return to his own country), are recorded in his Verses, addressed to Mr. Wordsworth, which will be found in the *Sibylline Leaves*, p. 197, ed. 1817, or *Poetical Works, by S. T. Coleridge*, vol. i. p. 206.

RYDAL MOUNT
July 13th, 1850.

BOOK FIRST

INTRODUCTION—CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-TIME

OH there is blessing in this gentle breeze,
A visitant that while it fans my cheek
Doth seem half-conscious of the joy it brings
From the green fields, and from yon azure sky.
Whate'er its mission, the soft breeze can come
To none more grateful than to me; escaped
From the vast city, where I long had pined
A discontented sojourner: now free,
Free as a bird to settle where I will.
What dwelling shall receive me? in what vale
Shall be my harbour? underneath what grove
Shall I take up my home? and what clear stream
Shall with its murmur lull me into rest?
The earth is all before me. With a heart
Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty,
I look about; and should the chosen guide
Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
I cannot miss my way. I breathe again!
Trances of thought and mountings of the mind
Come fast upon me: it is shaken off,
That burthen of my own unnatural self,
The heavy weight of many a weary day
Not mine, and such as were not made for me.
Long months of peace (if such bold word accord
With any promises of human life),
Long months of ease and undisturbed delight
Are mine in prospect; whither shall I turn,
By road or pathway, or through trackless field,
Up hill or down, or shall some floating thing
Upon the river point me out my course?

Dear Liberty! Yet what would it avail
But for a gift that consecrates the joy?
For I, methought, while the sweet breath of heaven
Was blowing on my body, felt within
A correspondent breeze, that gently moved

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[1] Now printed, see p. 334.

With quickening virtue, but is now become
A tempest, a redundant energy,
Vexing its own creation. Thanks to both,
And their congenial powers, that, while they join
In breaking up a long-continued frost,
Bring with them vernal promises, the hope
Of active days urged on by flying hours,—
Days of sweet leisure, taxed with patient thought
Abstruse, nor wanting punctual service high,
Matins and vespers of harmonious verse!

Thus far, O Friend! did I, not used to make
A present joy the matter of a song,
Pour forth that day my soul in measured strains
That would not be forgotten, and are here
Recorded: to the open fields I told
A prophecy: poetic numbers came
Spontaneously to clothe in priestly robe
A renovated spirit singled out,
Such hope was mine, for holy services.
My own voice cheered me, and, far more, the mind's
Internal echo of the imperfect sound;
To both I listened, drawing from them both
A cheerful confidence in things to come.

Content and not unwilling now to give
A respite to this passion, I paced on
With brisk and eager steps; and came, at length,
To a green shady place, where down I sate
Beneath a tree, slackening my thoughts by choice
And settling into gentler happiness.
'Twas autumn, and a clear and placid day,
With warmth, as much as needed, from a sun
Two hours declined towards the west; a day
With silver clouds, and sunshine on the grass,
And in the sheltered and the sheltering grove
A perfect stillness. Many were the thoughts
Encouraged and dismissed, till choice was made
Of a known Vale, whither my feet should turn,
Nor rest till they had reached the very door
Of the one cottage which methought I saw.
No picture of mere memory ever looked
So fair; and while upon the fancied scene
I gazed with growing love, a higher power
Than Fancy gave assurance of some work
Of glory there forthwith to be begun,
Perhaps too there performed. Thus long I mused,
Nor e'er lost sight of what I mused upon,
Save when, amid the stately grove of oaks,
Now here, now there, an acorn, from its cup
Dislodged, through sere leaves rustled, or at once
To the bare earth dropped with a startling sound.
From that soft couch I rose not, till the sun
Had almost touched the horizon; casting then
A backward glance upon the curling cloud
Of city smoke, by distance ruralised;
Keen as a Truant or a Fugitive,
But as a Pilgrim resolute, I took,
Even with the chance equipment of that hour,
The road that pointed toward the chosen Vale.
It was a splendid evening, and my soul
Once more made trial of her strength, nor lacked
Æolian visitations; but the harp
Was soon defrauded, and the banded host
Of harmony dispersed in straggling sounds,
And lastly utter silence! "Be it so;
Why think of anything but present good?"
So, like a home-bound labourer, I pursued
My way beneath the mellowing sun, that shed
Mild influence; nor left in me one wish
Again to bend the Sabbath of that time
To a servile yoke. What need of many words?
A pleasant loitering journey, through three days
Continued, brought me to my hermitage.
I spare to tell of what ensued, the life
In common things—the endless store of things,
Rare, or at least so seeming, every day
Found all about me in one neighbourhood—
The self-congratulation, and, from morn
To night, unbroken cheerfulness serene.

But speedily an earnest longing rose
To brace myself to some determined aim,
Reading or thinking; either to lay up
New stores, or rescue from decay the old
By timely interference: and therewith
Came hopes still higher, that with outward life
I might endue some airy phantasies
That had been floating loose about for years,
And to such beings temperately deal forth
The many feelings that oppressed my heart.
That hope hath been discouraged; welcome light
Dawns from the east, but dawns to disappear
And mock me with a sky that ripens not
Into a steady morning: if my mind,
Remembering the bold promise of the past,
Would gladly grapple with some noble theme,
Vain is her wish; where'er she turns she finds
Impediments from day to day renewed.

And now it would content me to yield up
Those lofty hopes awhile, for present gifts
Of humbler industry. But, oh, dear Friend!
The Poet, gentle creature as he is,
Hath, like the Lover, his unruly times;
His fits when he is neither sick nor well,
Though no distress be near him but his own
Unmanageable thoughts: his mind, best pleased
While she as duteous as the mother dove
Sits brooding, lives not always to that end,
But like the innocent bird, hath goadings on
That drive her as in trouble through the groves;
With me is now such passion, to be blamed
No otherwise than as it lasts too long.

When, as becomes a man who would prepare
For such an arduous work, I through myself
Make rigorous inquisition, the report
Is often cheering; for I neither seem
To lack that first great gift, the vital soul,
Nor general Truths, which are themselves a sort
Of Elements and Agents, Under-powers,
Subordinate helpers of the living mind:
Nor am I naked of external things,
Forms, images, nor numerous other aids
Of less regard, though won perhaps with toil
And needful to build up a Poet's praise.
Time, place, and manners do I seek, and these
Are found in plenteous store, but nowhere such
As may be singled out with steady choice;
No little band of yet remembered names
Whom I, in perfect confidence, might hope
To summon back from lonesome banishment,
And make them dwellers in the hearts of men
Now living, or to live in future years.
Sometimes the ambitious Power of choice, mistaking
Proud spring-tide swellings for a regular sea,
Will settle on some British theme, some old
Romantic tale by Milton left unsung;
More often turning to some gentle place
Within the groves of Chivalry, I pipe
To shepherd swains, or seated harp in hand,
Amid reposing knights by a river side
Or fountain, listen to the grave reports
Of dire enchantments faced and overcome
By the strong mind, and tales of warlike feats,
Where spear encountered spear, and sword with sword
Fought, as if conscious of the blazonry
That the shield bore, so glorious was the strife;
Whence inspiration for a song that winds
Through ever-changing scenes of votive quest
Wrongs to redress, harmonious tribute paid
To patient courage and unblemished truth,
To firm devotion, zeal unquenchable,
And Christian meekness hallowing faithful loves.
Sometimes, more sternly moved, I would relate
How vanquished Mithridates northward passed,
And, hidden in the cloud of years, became
Odin, the Father of a race by whom
Perished the Roman Empire: how the friends
And followers of Sertorius, out of Spain
Flying, found shelter in the Fortunate Isles,

And left their usages, their arts and laws,
To disappear by a slow gradual death,
To dwindle and to perish one by one,
Starved in those narrow bounds: but not the soul
Of Liberty, which fifteen hundred years
Survived, and, when the European came
With skill and power that might not be withstood,
Did, like a pestilence, maintain its hold
And wasted down by glorious death that race
Of natural heroes: or I would record
How, in tyrannic times, some high-souled man,
Unnamed among the chronicles of kings,
Suffered in silence for Truth's sake: or tell,
How that one Frenchman,[1] through continued force
Of meditation on the inhuman deeds
Of those who conquered first the Indian Isles,
Went single in his ministry across
The Ocean; not to comfort the oppressed,
But, like a thirsty wind, to roam about
Withering the Oppressor: how Gustavus sought
Help at his need in Dalecarlia's mines:
How Wallace fought for Scotland; left the name
Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
All over his dear Country; left the deeds
Of Wallace, like a family of Ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks,
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty.
Sometimes it suits me better to invent
A tale from my own heart, more near akin
To my own passions and habitual thoughts;
Some variegated story, in the main
Lofty, but the unsubstantial structure melts
Before the very sun that brightens it,
Mist into air dissolving! Then a wish,
My last and favourite aspiration, mounts
With yearning toward some philosophic song
Of Truth that cherishes our daily life;
With meditations passionate from deep
Recesses in man's heart, immortal verse
Thoughtfully fitted to the Orphean lyre;
But from this awful burthen I full soon
Take refuge and beguile myself with trust
That mellower years will bring a riper mind
And clearer insight. Thus my days are past
In contradiction; with no skill to part
Vague longing, haply bred by want of power,
From paramount impulse not to be withstood,
A timorous capacity, from prudence,
From circumspection, infinite delay.
Humility and modest awe, themselves
Betray me, serving often for a cloak
To a more subtle selfishness; that now
Locks every function up in blank reserve,
Now dupes me, trusting to an anxious eye
That with intrusive restlessness beats off
Simplicity and self-presented truth.
Ah! better far than this, to stray about
Voluptuously through fields and rural walks,
And ask no record of the hours, resigned
To vacant musing, unreproved neglect
Of all things, and deliberate holiday.
Far better never to have heard the name
Of zeal and just ambition, than to live
Baffled and plagued by a mind that every hour
Turns recreant to her task; takes heart again,
Then feels immediately some hollow thought
Hang like an interdict upon her hopes.
This is my lot; for either still I find
Some imperfection in the chosen theme,
Or see of absolute accomplishment
Much wanting, so much wanting, in myself,
That I recoil and droop, and seek repose
In listlessness from vain perplexity,
Unprofitably travelling toward the grave,
Like a false steward who hath much received
And renders nothing back.
Was it for this
That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
That flowed along my dreams? For this, didst thou,
O Derwent! winding among grassy holms
Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,
Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me

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[1] Dominique de Gourgues, a French gentleman who went in 1568 to Florida to avenge the massacre of the French by the Spaniards there.

Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.

When he had left the mountains and received
On his smooth breast the shadow of those towers
That yet survive, a shattered monument
Of feudal sway, the bright blue river passed
Along the margin of our terrace walk;
A tempting playmate whom we dearly loved.
Oh, many a time have I, a five years' child,
In a small mill-race severed from his stream,
Made one long bathing of a summer's day;
Basked in the sun, and plunged and basked again
Alternate, all a summer's day, or scoured
The sandy fields, leaping through flowery groves
Of yellow ragwort; or, when rock and hill,
The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
Were bronzed with deepest radiance, stood alone
Beneath the sky, as if I had been born
On Indian plains, and from my mother's hut
Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport
A naked savage, in the thunder shower.

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
Much favoured in my birth-place, and no less
In that belovèd Vale to which erelong
We were transplanted;—there were we let loose
For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
Ten birth-days, when among the mountain slopes
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung
To range the open heights where woodcocks run
Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,
Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
That anxious visitation;—moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befell
In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toil
Became my prey; and when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less, when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,
Moved we as plunderers where the mother-bird
Had in high places built her lodge; though mean
Our object and inglorious, yet the end
Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky
Of earth—and with what motion moved the clouds!

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society. How strange, that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,
And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;
Whether her fearless visitings, or those
That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light
Opening the peaceful clouds; or she would use

Severer interventions, ministry
More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

One summer evening (led by her) I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my bark,—
And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
And serious mood; but after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

[1] Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life and nature—purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us—for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.

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[1] These lines have been printed before. See p. 112.

So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
And Souls of lonely places! can I think
A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
Such ministry, when ye, through many a year
Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
Impressed, upon all forms, the characters
Of danger or desire; and thus did make
The surface of the universal earth,
With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,
Work like a sea?
Not uselessly employed,
Might I pursue this theme through every change
Of exercise and play, to which the year
Did summon us in his delightful round.

We were a noisy crew; the sun in heaven
Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours;
Nor saw a band in happiness and joy
Richer, or worthier of the ground they trod.
I could record with no reluctant voice
The woods of autumn, and their hazel bowers
With milk-white clusters hung; the rod and line,
True symbol of hope's foolishness, whose strong
And unreproved enchantment led us on
By rocks and pools shut out from every star,
All the green summer, to forlorn cascades
Among the windings hid of mountain brooks.
—Unfading recollections! at this hour
The heart is almost mine with which I felt,
From some hill-top on sunny afternoons,
The paper kite high among fleecy clouds
Pull at her rein like an impetuous courser;
Or, from the meadows sent on gusty days,
Beheld her breast the wind, then suddenly
Dashed headlong, and rejected by the storm.

Ye lowly cottages wherein we dwelt,
A ministration of your own was yours;
Can I forget you, being as you were
So beautiful among the pleasant fields
In which ye stood? or can I here forget
The plain and seemly countenance with which
Ye dealt out your plain comforts? Yet had ye
Delights and exultations of your own.
Eager and never weary we pursued
Our home-amusements by the warm peat-fire
At evening, when with pencil, and smooth slate
In square divisions parcelled out and all
With crosses and with cyphers scribbled o'er,
We schemed and puzzled, head opposed to head
In strife too humble to be named in verse:
Or round the naked table, snow-white deal,
Cherry or maple, sate in close array,
And to the combat, Loo or Whist, led on
A thick-ribbed army; not, as in the world,
Neglected and ungratefully thrown by

Even for the very service they had wrought,
But husbanded through many a long campaign.
Uncouth assemblage was it, where no few
Had changed their functions: some, plebeian cards
Which Fate, beyond the promise of their birth,
Had dignified, and called to represent
The persons of departed potentates.
Oh, with what echoes on the board they fell!
Ironic diamonds,—clubs, hearts, diamonds, spades,
A congregation piteously akin!
Cheap matter offered they to boyish wit,
Those sooty knaves, precipitated down
With scoffs and taunts, like Vulcan out of heaven:
The paramount ace, a moon in her eclipse,
Queens gleaming through their splendour's last decay,
And monarchs surly at the wrongs sustained
By royal visages. Meanwhile abroad
Incessant rain was falling, or the frost
Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth;
And, interrupting oft that eager game,
From under Esthwaite's splitting fields of ice
The pent-up air, struggling to free itself,
Gave out to meadow grounds and hills a loud
Protracted yelling, like the noise of wolves
Howling in troops along the Bothnic Main.

Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
How Nature by extrinsic passion first
Peopled the mind with forms sublime or fair,
And made me love them, may I here omit
How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
Of subtler origin; how I have felt,
Not seldom even in that tempestuous time,
Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense
Which seem, in their simplicity, to own
An intellectual charm; that calm delight
Which, if I err not, surely must belong
To those first-born affinities that fit
Our new existence to existing things,
And, in our dawn of being, constitute
The bond of union between life and joy.

Yes, I remember when the changeful earth,
And twice five summers on my mind had stamped
The faces of the moving year, even then
I held unconscious intercourse with beauty
Old as creation, drinking in a pure
Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths
Of curling mist, or from the level plain
Of waters coloured by impending clouds.

The sands of Westmoreland, the creeks and bays
Of Cumbria's rocky limits, they can tell
How, when the Sea threw off his evening shade,
And to the shepherd's hut on distant hills
Sent welcome notice of the rising moon,
How I have stood, to fancies such as these
A stranger, linking with the spectacle
No conscious memory of a kindred sight,
And bringing with me no peculiar sense
Of quietness or peace; yet have I stood,
Even while mine eye hath moved o'er many a league
Of shining water, gathering as it seemed,
Through every hair-breadth in that field of light,
New pleasure like a bee among the flowers.

Thus oft amid those fits of vulgar joy
Which, through all seasons, on a child's pursuits
Are prompt attendants, 'mid that giddy bliss
Which, like a tempest, works along the blood
And is forgotten; even then I felt
Gleams like the flashing of a shield;—the earth
And common face of Nature spake to me
Rememberable things; sometimes, 'tis true,
By chance collisions and quaint accidents
(Like those ill-sorted unions, work supposed
Of evil-minded fairies), yet not vain
Nor profitless, if haply they impressed
Collateral objects and appearances,
Albeit lifeless then, and doomed to sleep
Until maturer seasons called them forth
To impregnate and to elevate the mind.
—And if the vulgar joy by its own weight
Wearied itself out of the memory,
The scenes which were a witness of that joy

Remained in their substantial lineaments
Depicted on the brain, and to the eye
Were visible, a daily sight; and thus
By the impressive discipline of fear,
By pleasure and repeated happiness,
So frequently repeated, and by force
Of obscure feelings representative
Of things forgotten, these same scenes so bright,
So beautiful, so majestic in themselves,
Though yet the day was distant, did become
Habitually dear, and all their forms
And changeful colours by invisible links
Were fastened to the affections.
I began
My story early—not misled, I trust,
By an infirmity of love for days
Disowned by memory—ere the breath of spring
Planting my snowdrops among winter snows:
Nor will it seem to thee, O Friend! so prompt
In sympathy, that I have lengthened out
With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale.
Meanwhile, my hope has been, that I might fetch
Invigorating thoughts from former years;
Might fix the wavering balance of my mind,
And haply meet reproaches too, whose power
May spur me on, in manhood now mature
To honourable toil. Yet should these hopes
Prove vain, and thus should neither I be taught
To understand myself, nor thou to know
With better knowledge how the heart was framed
Of him thou lovest; need I dread from thee
Harsh judgments, if the song be loth to quit
Those recollected hours that have the charm
Of visionary things, those lovely forms
And sweet sensations that throw back our life,
And almost make remotest infancy
A visible scene, on which the sun is shining?

One end at least hath been attained; my mind
Hath been revived, and if this genial mood
Desert me not, forthwith shall be brought down
Through later years the story of my life.
The road lies plain before me;—'tis a theme
Single and of determined bounds; and hence
I choose it rather at this time, than work
Of ampler or more varied argument,
Where I might be discomfited and lost:
And certain hopes are with me, that to thee
This labour will be welcome, honoured Friend!

Book Second

SCHOOL-TIME (*continued*)

Thus far, O Friend! have we, though leaving much
Unvisited, endeavoured to retrace
The simple ways in which my childhood walked;
Those chiefly that first led me to the love
Of rivers, woods, and fields. The passion yet
Was in its birth, sustained as might befall
By nourishment that came unsought; for still
From week to week, from month to month, we lived
A round of tumult. Duly were our games
Prolonged in summer till the daylight failed:
No chair remained before the doors; the bench
And threshold steps were empty; fast asleep
The labourer, and the old man who had sate
A later lingerer; yet the revelry
Continued and the loud uproar: at last,
When all the ground was dark, and twinkling stars
Edged the black clouds, home and to bed we went,
Feverish with weary joints and beating minds.
Ah! is there one who ever has been young,
Nor needs a warning voice to tame the pride
Of intellect and virtue's self-esteem?
One is there, though the wisest and the best

Of all mankind, who covets not at times
Union that cannot be;—who would not give
If so he might, to duty and to truth
The eagerness of infantine desire?
A tranquillising spirit presses now
On my corporeal frame, so wide appears
The vacancy between me and those days
Which yet have such self-presence in my mind,
That, musing on them, often do I seem
Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
And of some other Being. A rude mass
Of native rock, left midway in the square
Of our small market village, was the goal
Or centre of these sports; and when, returned
After long absence, thither I repaired,
Gone was the old grey stone, and in its place
A smart Assembly-room usurped the ground
That had been ours. There let the fiddle scream,
And be ye happy! Yet, my Friends! I know
That more than one of you will think with me
Of those soft starry nights, and that old Dame
From whom the stone was named, who there had sate,
And watched her table with its huckster's wares
Assiduous, through the length of sixty years.

We ran a boisterous course; the year span round
With giddy motion. But the time approached
That brought with it a regular desire
For calmer pleasures, when the winning forms
Of Nature were collaterally attached
To every scheme of holiday delight
And every boyish sport, less grateful else
And languidly pursued.
When summer came,
Our pastime was, on bright half-holidays,
To sweep along the plain of Windermere
With rival oars; and the selected bourne
Was now an Island musical with birds
That sang and ceased not; now a Sister Isle
Beneath the oaks' umbrageous covert, sown
With lilies of the valley like a field;
And now a third small Island, where survived
In solitude the ruins of a shrine
Once to Our Lady dedicate, and served
Daily with chaunted rites. In such a race
So ended, disappointment could be none,
Uneasiness, or pain, or jealousy:
We rested in the shade, all pleased alike,
Conquered and conqueror. Thus the pride of strength,
And the vain-glory of superior skill,
Were tempered; thus was gradually produced
A quiet independence of the heart;
And to my Friend who knows me I may add,
Fearless of blame, that hence for future days
Ensued a diffidence and modesty,
And I was taught to feel, perhaps too much,
The self-sufficing power of Solitude.

Our daily meals were frugal, Sabine fare!
More than we wished we knew the blessing then
Of vigorous hunger—hence corporeal strength
Unsapped by delicate viands; for, exclude
A little weekly stipend, and we lived
Through three divisions of the quartered year
In penniless poverty. But now to school
From the half-yearly holidays returned,
We came with weightier purses, that sufficed
To furnish treats more costly than the Dame
Of the old grey stone, from her scant board, supplied.
Hence rustic dinners on the cool green ground,
Or in the woods, or by a river side
Or shady fountains, while among the leaves
Soft airs were stirring, and the mid-day sun
Unfelt shone brightly round us in our joy.
Nor is my aim neglected if I tell
How sometimes, in the length of those half-years,
We from our funds drew largely;—proud to curb,
And eager to spur on, the galloping steed;
And with the courteous inn-keeper, whose stud

Supplied our want, we haply might employ
Sly subterfuge, if the adventure's bound
Were distant: some famed temple where of yore
The Druids worshipped, or the antique walls
Of that large abbey, where within the Vale
Of Nightshade, to St. Mary's honour built,
Stands yet a mouldering pile with fractured arch,
Belfry, and images, and living trees;
A holy scene!—Along the smooth green turf
Our horses grazed. To more than inland peace,
Left by the west wind sweeping overhead
From a tumultuous ocean, trees and towers
In that sequestered valley may be seen,
Both silent and both motionless alike;
Such the deep shelter that is there, and such
The safeguard for repose and quietness.

Our steeds remounted and the summons given,
With whip and spur we through the chauntry flew
In uncouth race, and left the cross-legged knight,
And the stone-abbot, and that single wren
Which one day sang so sweetly in the nave
Of the old church, that—though from recent showers
The earth was comfortless, and, touched by faint
Internal breezes, sobbings of the place
And respirations, from the roofless walls
The shuddering ivy dripped large drops—yet still
So sweetly 'mid the gloom the invisible bird
Sang to herself, that there I could have made
My dwelling-place, and lived for ever there
To hear such music. Through the walls we flew
And down the valley, and, a circuit made
In wantonness of heart, through rough and smooth
We scampered homewards. Oh, ye rocks and streams,
And that still spirit shed from evening air!
Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
Your presence, when with slackened step we breathed
Along the sides of the steep hills, or when
Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the sea
We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.

Midway on long Winander's eastern shore,
Within the crescent of a pleasant bay,
A tavern stood; no homely-featured house,
Primeval like its neighbouring cottages,
But 'twas a splendid place, the door beset
With chaises, grooms, and liveries, and within
Decanters, glasses, and the blood-red wine.
In ancient times, and ere the Hall was built
On the large island, had this dwelling been
More worthy of a poet's love, a hut,
Proud of its own bright fire and sycamore shade.
But—though the rhymes were gone that once inscribed
The threshold, and large golden characters,
Spread o'er the spangled sign-board, had dislodged
The old Lion and usurped his place, in slight
And mockery of the rustic painter's hand—
Yet, to this hour, the spot to me is dear
With all its foolish pomp. The garden lay
Upon a slope surmounted by a plain
Of a small bowling-green; beneath us stood
A grove, with gleams of water through the trees
And over the tree-tops; nor did we want
Refreshment, strawberries and mellow cream.
There, while through half an afternoon we played
On the smooth platform, whether skill prevailed
Or happy blunder triumphed, bursts of glee
Made all the mountains ring. But, ere night-fall,
When in our pinnace we returned at leisure
Over the shadowy lake, and to the beach
Of some small island steered our course with one,
The Minstrel of the Troop, and left him there,
And rowed off gently, while he blew his flute
Alone upon the rock—oh, then, the calm

And dead still water lay upon my mind
Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,
Never before so beautiful, sank down
Into my heart, and held me like a dream!
Thus were my sympathies enlarged, and thus
Daily the common range of visible things
Grew dear to me: already I began
To love the sun; a boy I loved the sun,
Not as I since have loved him, as a pledge
And surety of our earthly life, a light
Which we behold and feel we are alive;
Nor for his bounty to so many worlds—
But for this cause, that I had seen him lay
His beauty on the morning hills, had seen
The western mountain touch his setting orb,
In many a thoughtless hour, when, from excess
Of happiness, my blood appeared to flow
For its own pleasure, and I breathed with joy.
And, from like feelings, humble though intense,
To patriotic and domestic love
Analogous, the moon to me was dear;
For I could dream away my purposes,
Standing to gaze upon her while she hung
Midway between the hills, as if she knew
No other region, but belonged to thee,
Yea, appertained by a peculiar right
To thee and thy grey huts, thou one dear Vale!

Those incidental charms which first attached
My heart to rural objects, day by day
Grew weaker, and I hasten on to tell
How Nature, intervenient till this time
And secondary, now at length was sought
For her own sake. But who shall parcel out
His intellect by geometric rules,
Split like a province into round and square?
Who knows the individual hour in which
His habits were first sown, even as a seed?
Who that shall point as with a wand and say
"This portion of the river of my mind
Came from yon fountain?" Thou, my Friend! art one
More deeply read in thy own thoughts; to thee
Science appears but what in truth she is,
Not as our glory and our absolute boast,
But as a succedaneum, and a prop
To our infirmity. No officious slave
Art thou of that false secondary power
By which we multiply distinctions, then
Deem that our puny boundaries are things
That we perceive, and not that we have made.
To thee, unblinded by these formal arts,
The unity of all hath been revealed,
And thou wilt doubt, with me less aptly skilled
Than many are to range the faculties
In scale and order, class the cabinet
Of their sensations, and in voluble phrase
Run through the history and birth of each
As of a single independent thing.
Hard task, vain hope, to analyse the mind,
If each most obvious and particular thought,
Not in a mystical and idle sense,
But in the words of Reason deeply weighed
Hath no beginning.
Blest the infant Babe,
(For with my best conjecture I would trace
Our Being's earthly progress,) blest the Babe,
Nursed in his Mother's arms, who sinks to sleep
Rocked on his Mother's breast; who with his soul
Drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye!
For him, in one dear Presence, there exists
A virtue which irradiates and exalts
Objects through widest intercourse of sense
No outcast he, bewildered and depressed:
Along his infant veins are interfused
The gravitation and the filial bond
Of nature that connect him with the world.
Is there a flower, to which he points with hand
Too weak to gather it, already love
Drawn from love's purest earthly fount for him
Hath beautified that flower; already shades
Of pity cast from inward tenderness
Do fall around him upon aught that bears
Unsightly marks of violence or harm.
Emphatically such a Being lives,
Frail creature as he is, helpless as frail,
An inmate of this active universe:
For, feeling has to him imparted power
That through the growing faculties of sense
Doth like an agent of the one great Mind

Create, creator and receiver both,
Working but in alliance with the works
Which it beholds.—Such, verily, is the first
Poetic spirit of our human life,
By uniform control of after years,
In most, abated or suppressed; in some,
Through every change of growth and of decay,
Pre-eminent till death.
From early days,
Beginning not long after that first time
In which, a Babe, by intercourse of touch
I held mute dialogues with my Mother's heart,
I have endeavoured to display the means
Whereby this infant sensibility,
Great birthright of our being, was in me
Augmented and sustained. Yet is a path
More difficult before me; and I fear
That in its broken windings we shall need
The chamois' sinews, and the eagle's wing:
For now a trouble came into my mind
From unknown causes. I was left alone
Seeking the visible world, nor knowing why.
The props of my affections were removed,
And yet the building stood, as if sustained
By its own spirit! All that I beheld
Was dear, and hence to finer influxes
The mind lay open to a more exact
And close communion. Many are our joys
In youth, but oh! what happiness to live
When every hour brings palpable access
Of knowledge, when all knowledge is delight,
And sorrow is not there! The seasons came,
And every season wheresoe'er I moved
Unfolded transitory qualities,
Which, but for this most watchful power of love,
Had been neglected; left a register
Of permanent relations, else unknown.
Hence life, and change, and beauty, solitude
More active ever than "best society"—
Society made sweet as solitude
By silent inobtrusive sympathies,
And gentle agitations of the mind
From manifold distinctions, difference
Perceived in things, where, to the unwatchful eye,
No difference is, and hence, from the same source,
Sublimer joy; for I would walk alone,
Under the quiet stars, and at that time
Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound
To breathe an elevated mood, by form
Or image unprofaned; and I would stand,
If the night blackened with a coming storm,
Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are
The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
Or make their dim abode in distant winds.
Thence did I drink the visionary power;
And deem not profitless those fleeting moods
Of shadowy exultation: not for this,
That they are kindred to our purer mind
And intellectual life; but that the soul,
Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
Remembering not, retains an obscure sense
Of possible sublimity, whereto
With growing faculties she doth aspire,
With faculties still growing, feeling still
That whatsoever point they gain, they yet
Have something to pursue.
And not alone,
'Mid gloom and tumult, but no less 'mid fair
And tranquil scenes, that universal power
And fitness in the latent qualities
And essences of things, by which the mind
Is moved with feelings of delight, to me
Came strengthened with a superadded soul,
A virtue not its own. My morning walks
Were early;—oft before the hours of school
I travelled round our little lake, five miles
Of pleasant wandering. Happy time! more dear
For this, that one was by my side, a Friend,[1]
Then passionately loved; with heart how full
Would he peruse these lines! For many years
Have since flowed in between us, and, our minds
Both silent to each other, at this time
We live as if those hours had never been.
Nor seldom did I lift our cottage latch
Far earlier, ere one smoke-wreath had risen

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[1] The late Rev. John Fleming, of Rayrigg, Windermere.

From human dwelling, or the vernal thrush
Was audible; and sate among the woods
Alone upon some jutting eminence,
At the first gleam of dawn-light, when the Vale,
Yet slumbering, lay in utter solitude.
How shall I seek the origin? where find
Faith in the marvellous things which then I felt?
Oft in these moments such a holy calm
Would overspread my soul, that bodily eyes
Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw
Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
A prospect in the mind.
'Twere long to tell
What spring and autumn, what the winter snows,
And what the summer shade, what day and night,
Evening and morning, sleep and waking, thought
From sources inexhaustible, poured forth
To feed the spirit of religious love
In which I walked with Nature. But let this
Be not forgotten, that I still retained
My first creative sensibility;
That by the regular action of the world
My soul was unsubdued. A plastic power
Abode with me; a forming hand, at times
Rebellious, acting in a devious mood;
A local spirit of his own, at war
With general tendency, but, for the most,
Subservient strictly to external things
With which it communed. An auxiliar light
Came from my mind, which on the setting sun
Bestowed new splendour; the melodious birds,
The fluttering breezes, fountains that run on
Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obeyed
A like dominion, and the midnight storm
Grew darker in the presence of my eye:
Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,
And hence my transport.
Nor should this, perchance,
Pass unrecorded, that I still had loved
The exercise and produce of a toil,
Than analytic industry to me
More pleasing, and whose character I deem
Is more poetic as resembling more
Creative agency. The song would speak
Of that interminable building reared
By observation of affinities
In objects where no brotherhood exists
To passive minds. My seventeenth year was come
And, whether from this habit rooted now
So deeply in my mind, or from excess
In the great social principle of life
Coercing all things into sympathy,
To unorganic natures were transferred
My own enjoyments; or the power of truth
Coming in revelation, did converse
With things that really are; I, at this time,
Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
Thus while the days flew by, and years passed on,
From Nature and her overflowing soul,
I had received so much, that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;
O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
If high the transport, great the joy I felt,
Communing in this sort through earth and heaven
With every form of creature, as it looked
Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
Of adoration, with an eye of love.
One song they sang, and it was audible,
Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,
O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,
Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.

If this be error, and another faith
Find easier access to the pious mind,
Yet were I grossly destitute of all
Those human sentiments that make this earth
So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice

To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
That dwell among the hills where I was born.
If in my youth I have been pure in heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
With God and Nature communing, removed
From little enmities and low desires—
The gift is yours; if in these times of fear,
This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,
If, 'mid indifference and apathy,
And wicked exultation when good men
On every side fall off, we know not how,
To selfishness, disguised in gentle names
Of peace and quiet and domestic love
Yet mingled not unwillingly with sneers
On visionary minds; if, in this time
Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
Despair not of our nature, but retain
A more than Roman confidence, a faith
That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
The blessing of my life—the gift is yours,
Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours,
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
My lofty speculations; and in thee,
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
A never-failing principle of joy
And purest passion.
Thou, my Friend! wert reared
In the great city, 'mid far other scenes;
But we, by different roads, at length have gained
The selfsame bourne. And for this cause to thee
I speak, unapprehensive of contempt,
The insinuated scoff of coward tongues,
And all that silent language which so oft
In conversation between man and man
Blots from the human countenance all trace
Of beauty and of love. For thou hast sought
The truth in solitude, and, since the days
That gave thee liberty, full long desired,
To serve in Nature's temple, thou hast been
The most assiduous of her ministers;
In many things my brother, chiefly here
In this our deep devotion.
Fare thee well!
Health and the quiet of a healthful mind
Attend thee! seeking oft the haunts of men,
And yet more often living with thyself,
And for thyself, so haply shall thy days
Be many, and a blessing to mankind.

BOOK THIRD

RESIDENCE AT CAMBRIDGE

It was a dreary morning when the wheels
Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with clouds,
And nothing cheered our way till first we saw
The long-roofed chapel of King's College lift
Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,
Extended high above a dusky grove.

Advancing, we espied upon the road
A student clothed in gown and tasselled cap,
Striding along as if o'ertasked by Time,
Or covetous of exercise and air;
He passed—nor was I master of my eyes
Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.
As near and nearer to the spot we drew,
It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's force.
Onward we drove beneath the Castle; caught,
While crossing Magdalene Bridge, a glimpse of Cam;
And at the *Hoop* alighted, famous Inn.

My spirit was up, my thoughts were full of hope;
Some friends I had, acquaintances who there
Seemed friends, poor simple schoolboys, now hung round
With honour and importance: in a world
Of welcome faces up and down I roved;
Questions, directions, warnings and advice,
Flowed in upon me, from all sides; fresh day
Of pride and pleasure! to myself I seemed
A man of business and expense, and went
From shop to shop about my own affairs,
To Tutor or to Tailor, as befell,
From street to street with loose and careless mind.

I was the Dreamer, they the Dream; I roamed

Delighted through the motley spectacle;
Gowns grave, or gaudy, doctors, students, streets,
Courts, cloisters, flocks of churches, gateways, towers:
Migration strange for a stripling of the hills,
A northern villager.
As if the change
Had waited on some Fairy's wand, at once
Behold me rich in monies, and attired
In splendid garb, with hose of silk, and hair
Powdered like rimy trees, when frost is keen.
My lordly dressing-gown, I pass it by,
With other signs of manhood that supplied
The lack of beard.—The weeks went roundly on,
With invitations, suppers, wine and fruit,
Smooth housekeeping within, and all without
Liberal, and suiting gentleman's array.

The Evangelist St. John my patron was:
Three Gothic courts are his, and in the first
Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure;
Right underneath, the College kitchens made
A humming sound, less tuneable than bees,
But hardly less industrious; with shrill notes
Of sharp command and scolding intermixed.
Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock,
Who never let the quarters, night or day,
Slip by him unproclaimed, and told the hours
Twice over with a male and female voice.
Her pealing organ was my neighbour too;
And from my pillow, looking forth by light
Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold
The antechapel where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

Of College labours, of the Lecturer's room
All studded round, as thick as chairs could stand,
With loyal students, faithful to their books,
Half-and-half idlers, hardy recusants,
And honest dunces—of important days,
Examinations, when the man was weighed
As in a balance! of excessive hopes,
Tremblings withal and commendable fears,
Small jealousies, and triumphs good or bad—
Let others that know more speak as they know.
Such glory was but little sought by me,
And little won. Yet from the first crude days
Of settling time in this untried abode,
I was disturbed at times by prudent thoughts,
Wishing to hope without a hope, some fears
About my future worldly maintenance,
And, more than all, a strangeness in the mind,
A feeling that I was not for that hour,
Nor for that place. But wherefore be cast down?
For (not to speak of Reason and her pure
Reflective acts to fix the moral law
Deep in the conscience, nor of Christian Hope,
Bowing her head before her sister Faith
As one far mightier), hither I had come,
Bear witness Truth, endowed with holy powers
And faculties, whether to work or feel.
Oft when the dazzling show no longer new
Had ceased to dazzle, ofttimes did I quit
My comrades, leave the crowd, buildings and groves,
And as I paced alone the level fields
Far from those lovely sights and sounds sublime
With which I had been conversant, the mind
Drooped not; but there into herself returning,
With prompt rebound seemed fresh as heretofore.
At least I more distinctly recognised
Her native instincts: let me dare to speak
A higher language, say that now I felt
What independent solaces were mine,
To mitigate the injurious sway of place
Or circumstance, how far soever changed
In youth, or *to* be changed in after years.
As if awakened, summoned, roused, constrained,
I looked for universal things; perused
The common countenance of earth and sky:
Earth, nowhere unembellished by some trace
Of that first Paradise whence man was driven;

And sky, whose beauty and bounty are expressed
By the proud name she bears—the name of Heaven.
I called on both to teach me what they might;
Or, turning the mind in upon herself,
Pored, watched, expected, listened, spread my thoughts
And spread them with a wider creeping; felt
Incumbencies more awful, visitings
Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,
That tolerates the indignities of Time,
And, from the centre of Eternity
All finite motions overruling, lives
In glory immutable. But peace! enough
Here to record that I was mounting now
To such community with highest truth—
A track pursuing, not untrod before,
From strict analogies by thought supplied
Or consciousnesses not to be subdued.
To every natural form, rock, fruits, or flower,
Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
Add that whate'er of Terror or of Love
Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on
From transitory passion, unto this
I was as sensitive as waters are
To the sky's influence in a kindred mood
Of passion; was obedient as a lute
That waits upon the touches of the wind.
Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most rich—
I had a world about me—'twas my own;
I made it, for it only lived to me,
And to the God who sees into the heart.
Such sympathies, though rarely, were betrayed
By outward gestures and by visible looks:
Some called it madness—so indeed it was,
If child-like fruitfulness in passing joy,
If steady moods of thoughtfulness matured
To inspiration, sort with such a name;
If prophecy be madness; if things viewed
By poets in old time, and higher up
By the first men, earth's first inhabitants,
May in these tutored days no more be seen
With undisordered sight. But leaving this,
It was no madness, for the bodily eye
Amid my strongest workings evermore
Was searching out the lines of difference
As they lie hid in all external forms,
Near or remote, minute or vast; an eye
Which, from a tree, a stone, a withered leaf,
To the broad ocean and the azure heavens
Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars,
Could find no surface where its power might sleep;
Which spake perpetual logic to my soul,
And by an unrelenting agency
Did bind my feelings even as in a chain.

And here, O Friend! have I retraced my life
Up to an eminence, and told a tale
Of matters which not falsely may be called
The glory of my youth. Of genius, power,
Creation and divinity itself
I have been speaking, for my theme has been
What passed within me. Not of outward things
Done visibly for other minds, words, signs,
Symbols or actions, but of my own heart
Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind.
O Heavens! how awful is the might of souls,
And what they do within themselves while yet
The yoke of earth is new to them, the world
Nothing but a wild field where they were sown.
This is, in truth, heroic argument,
This genuine prowess, which I wished to touch
With hand however weak, but in the main
It lies far hidden from the reach of words.
Points have we all of us within our souls
Where all stand single; this I feel, and make
Breathings for incommunicable powers;
But is not each a memory to himself,
And, therefore, now that we must quit this theme,
I am not heartless, for there's not a man

That lives who hath not known his god-like hours,
And feels not what an empire we inherit
As natural beings in the strength of Nature.

No more: for now into a populous plain
We must descend. A Traveller I am,
Whose tale is only of himself; even so,
So be it, if the pure of heart be prompt
To follow, and if thou, my honoured Friend!
Who in these thoughts art ever at my side,
Support, as heretofore, my fainting steps.

It hath been told, that when the first delight
That flashed upon me from this novel show
Had failed, the mind returned into herself;
Yet true it is, that I had made a change
In climate, and my nature's outward coat
Changed also slowly and insensibly.
Full oft the quiet and exalted thoughts
Of loneliness gave way to empty noise
And superficial pastimes; now and then
Forced labour, and more frequently forced hopes;
And, worst of all, a treasonable growth
Of indecisive judgments, that impaired
And shook the mind's simplicity.—And yet
This was a gladsome time. Could I behold—
Who, less insensible than sodden clay
In a sea-river's bed at ebb of tide,
Could have beheld,—with undelighted heart,
So many happy youths, so wide and fair
A congregation in its budding-time
Of health, and hope, and beauty, all at once
So many divers samples from the growth
Of life's sweet season—could have seen unmoved
That miscellaneous garland of wild flowers
Decking the matron temples of a place
So famous through the world? To me, at least,
It was a goodly prospect: for, in sooth,
Though I had learnt betimes to stand unpropped,
And independent musings pleased me so
That spells seemed on me when I was alone,
Yet could I only cleave to solitude
In lonely places; if a throng was near
That way I leaned by nature; for my heart
Was social, and loved idleness and joy.

Not seeking those who might participate
My deeper pleasures (nay, I had not once,
Though not unused to mutter lonesome songs,
Even with myself divided such delight,
Or looked that way for aught that might be clothed
In human language), easily I passed
From the remembrances of better things,
And slipped into the ordinary works
Of careless youth, unburthened, unalarmed.
Caverns there were within my mind which sun
Could never penetrate, yet did there not
Want store of leafy *arbours* where the light
Might enter in at will. Companionships,
Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all.
We sauntered, played, or rioted; we talked
Unprofitable talk at morning hours;
Drifted about along the streets and walks,
Read lazily in trivial books, went forth
To gallop through the country in blind zeal
Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast
Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the stars
Come forth, perhaps without one quiet thought.

Such was the tenor of the second act
In this new life. Imagination slept,
And yet not utterly. I could not print
Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps
Of generations of illustrious men,
Unmoved. I could not always lightly pass
Through the same gateways, sleep where they had slept,
Wake where they waked, range that inclosure old,
That garden of great intellects, undisturbed.
Place also by the side of this dark sense
Of noble feeling, that those spiritual men,
Even the great Newton's own ethereal self,
Seemed humbled in these precincts thence to be
The more endeared. Their several memories here
(Even like their persons in their portraits clothed

With the accustomed garb of daily life)
Put on a lowly and a touching grace
Of more distinct humanity, that left
All genuine admiration unimpaired.

Beside the pleasant Mill of Trompington
I laughed with Chaucer in the hawthorn shade;
Heard him, while birds were warbling, tell his tales
Of amorous passion. And that gentle Bard,
Chosen by the Muses for their Page of State—
Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven
With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace,
I called him Brother, Englishman, and Friend!
Yea, our blind Poet, who in his later day,
Stood almost single; uttering odious truth—
Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,
Soul awful—if the earth has ever lodged
An awful soul—I seemed to see him here
Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress
Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth—
A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks
Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
And conscious step of purity and pride.
Among the band of my compeers was one
Whom chance had stationed in the very room
Honoured by Milton's name. O temperate Bard!
Be it confest that, for the first time, seated
Within thy innocent lodge and oratory,
One of a festive circle, I poured out
Libations, to thy memory drank, till pride
And gratitude grew dizzy in a brain
Never excited by the fumes of wine
Before that hour, or since. Then, forth I ran
From the assembly; through a length of streets,
Ran, ostrich-like, to reach our chapel door
In not a desperate or opprobrious time,
Albeit long after the importunate bell
Had stopped, with wearisome Cassandra voice
No longer haunting the dark winter night.
Call back, O Friend! a moment to thy mind,
The place itself and fashion of the rites.
With careless ostentation shouldering up
My surplice, through the inferior throng I clove
Of the plain Burghers, who in audience stood
On the last skirts of their permitted ground,
Under the pealing organ. Empty thoughts!
I am ashamed of them: and that great Bard,
And thou, O Friend! who in thy ample mind
Hast placed me high above my best deserts,
Ye will forgive the weakness of that hour,
In some of its unworthy vanities,
Brother to many more.
In this mixed sort
The months passed on, remissly, not given up
To wilful alienation from the right,
Or walks of open scandal, but in vague
And loose indifference, easy likings, aims
Of a low pitch—duty and zeal dismissed,
Yet Nature, or a happy course of things
Not doing in their stead the needful work.
The memory languidly revolved, the heart
Reposed in noontide rest, the inner pulse
Of contemplation almost failed to beat.
Such life might not inaptly be compared
To a floating island, an amphibious spot
Unsound, of spongy texture, yet withal
Not wanting a fair face of water weeds
And pleasant flowers. The thirst of living praise,
Fit reverence for the glorious Dead, the sight
Of those long vistas, sacred catacombs,
Where mighty *minds* lie visibly entombed,
Have often stirred the heart of youth, and bred
A fervent love of rigorous discipline.—
Alas! such high emotion touched not me.
Look was there none within these walls to shame
My easy spirits, and discountenance
Their light composure, far less to instil
A calm resolve of mind, firmly addressed
To puissant efforts. Nor was this the blame
Of others but my own; I should, in truth,
As far as doth concern my single self,
Misdeem most widely, lodging it elsewhere:
For I, bred up, 'mid Nature's luxuries,
Was a spoiled child, and, rambling like the wind,

As I had done in daily intercourse
With those crystalline rivers, solemn heights,
And mountains, ranging like a fowl of the air,
I was ill-tutored for captivity;
To quit my pleasure, and, from month to month,
Take up a station calmly on the perch
Of sedentary peace. Those lovely forms
Had also left less space within my mind,
Which, wrought upon instinctively, had found
A freshness in those objects of her love,
A winning power, beyond all other power.
Not that I slighted books,—that were to lack
All sense,—but other passions in me ruled,
Passions more fervent, making me less prompt
To in-door study than was wise or well,
Or suited to those years. Yet I, though used
In magisterial liberty to rove,
Culling such flowers of learning as might tempt
A random choice, could shadow forth a place
(If now I yield not to a flattering dream)
Whose studious aspect should have bent me down
To instantaneous service; should at once
Have made me pay to science and to arts
And written lore, acknowledged my liege lord,
A homage frankly offered up, like that
Which I had paid to Nature. Toil and pains
In this recess, by thoughtful Fancy built,
Should spread from heart to heart; and stately groves,
Majestic edifices, should not want
A corresponding dignity within.
The congregating temper that pervades
Our unripe years, not wasted, should be taught
To minister to works of high attempt—
Works which the enthusiast would perform with love.
Youth should be awed, religiously possessed
With a conviction of the power that waits
On knowledge, when sincerely sought and prized
For its own sake, on glory and on praise
If but by labour won, and fit to endure
The passing day; should learn to put aside
Her trappings here, should strip them off abashed
Before antiquity and stedfast truth
And strong book-mindedness; and over all
A healthy sound simplicity should reign,
A seemly plainness, name it what you will,
Republican or pious.
If these thoughts
Are a gratuitous emblazonry
That mocks the recreant age *we* live in, then
Be Folly and False-seeming free to affect
Whatever formal gait of discipline
Shall raise them highest in their own esteem—
Let them parade among the Schools at will,
But spare the House of God. Was ever known
The witless shepherd who persists to drive
A flock that thirsts not to a pool disliked?
A weight must surely hang on days begun
And ended with such mockery. Be wise,
Ye Presidents and Deans, and, till the spirit
Of ancient times revive, and youth be trained
At home in pious service, to your bells
Give seasonable rest, for 'tis a sound
Hollow as ever vexed the tranquil air;
And your officious doings bring disgrace
On the plain steeples of our English Church,
Whose worship, 'mid remotest village trees,
Suffers for this. Even Science, too, at hand
In daily sight of this irreverence,
Is smitten thence with an unnatural taint,
Loses her just authority, falls beneath
Collateral suspicion, else unknown.
This truth escaped me not, and I confess,
That having 'mid my native hills given loose
To a schoolboy's vision, I had raised a pile
Upon the basis of the coming time,
That fell in ruins round me. Oh, what joy
To see a sanctuary for our country's youth
Informed with such a spirit as might be
Its own protection; a primeval grove,
Where, though the shades with cheerfulness were filled,
Nor indigent of songs warbled from crowds
In under-coverts, yet the countenance
Of the whole place should bear a stamp of awe;
A habitation sober and demure
For ruminating creatures; a domain
For quiet things to wander in; a haunt

In which the heron should delight to feed
By the shy rivers, and the pelican
Upon the cypress spire in lonely thought
Might sit and sun himself.—Alas! Alas!
In vain for such solemnity I looked;
Mine eyes were crossed by butterflies, ears vexed
By chattering popinjays; the inner heart
Seemed trivial, and the impresses without
Of a too gaudy region.
Different sight
Those venerable Doctors saw of old,
When all who dwelt within these famous walls
Led in abstemiousness a studious life;
When, in forlorn and naked chambers cooped
And crowded, o'er the ponderous books they hung
Like caterpillars eating out their way
In silence, or with keen devouring noise
Not to be tracked or fathered. Princes then
At matins froze, and couched at curfew-time,
Trained up through piety and zeal to prize
Spare diet, patient labour, and plain weeds.
O seat of Arts! renowned throughout the world!
Far different service in those homely days
The Muses' modest nurslings underwent
From their first childhood: in that glorious time
When Learning, like a stranger come from far,
Sounding through Christian lands her trumpet, roused
Peasant and king; when boys and youths, the growth
Of raggèd villages and crazy huts,
Forsook their homes, and, errant in the quest
Of Patron, famous school or friendly nook,
Where, pensioned, they in shelter might sit down,
From town to town and through wide scattered realms
Journeyed with ponderous folios in their hands;
And often, starting from some covert place,
Saluted the chance comer on the road,
Crying, "An obolus, a penny give
To a poor scholar!"—when illustrious men,
Lovers of truth, by penury constrained,
Bucer, Erasmus, or Melancthon, read
Before the doors or windows of their cells
By moonshine through mere lack of taper light.

But peace to vain regrets! We see but darkly
Even when we look behind us, and best things
Are not so pure by nature that they needs
Must keep to all, as fondly all believe,
Their highest promise. If the mariner,
When at reluctant distance he hath passed
Some tempting island, could but know the ills
That must have fallen upon him had he brought
His bark to land upon the wished-for shore,
Good cause would oft be his to thank the surf
Whose white belt scared him thence, or wind that blew
Inexorably adverse: for myself
I grieve not; happy is the gownèd youth,
Who only misses what I missed, who falls
No lower than I fell.
I did not love,
Judging not ill perhaps, the timid course
Of our scholastic studies; could have wished
To see the river flow with ampler range
And freer pace; but more, far more, I grieved
To see displayed among an eager few,
Who in the field of contest persevered,
Passions unworthy of youth's generous heart
And mounting spirit, pitiably repaid,
When so disturbed, whatever palms are won.
From these I turned to travel with the shoal
Of more unthinking natures, easy minds
And pillowy; yet not wanting love that makes
The day pass lightly on, when foresight sleeps,
And wisdom and the pledges interchanged
With our own inner being are forgot.

Yet was this deep vacation not given up
To utter waste. Hitherto I had stood
In my own mind remote from social life,
(At least from what we commonly so name,)
Like a lone shepherd on a promontory

Who lacking occupation looks far forth
Into the boundless sea, and rather makes
Than finds what he beholds. And sure it is,
That this first transit from the smooth delights
And wild outlandish walks of simple youth
To something that resembles an approach
Towards human business, to a privileged world
Within a world, a midway residence
With all its intervenient imagery,
Did better suit my visionary mind,
Far better, than to have been bolted forth,
Thrust out abruptly into Fortune's way
Among the conflicts of substantial life;
By a more just gradation did lead on
To higher things; more naturally matured,
For permanent possession, better fruits,
Whether of truth or virtue, to ensue.
In serious mood, but oftener, I confess,
With playful zest of fancy, did we note
(How could we less?) the manners and the ways
Of those who lived distinguished by the badge
Of good or ill report; or those with whom
By frame of Academic discipline
We were perforce connected, men whose sway
And known authority of office served
To set our minds on edge, and did no more.
Nor wanted we rich pastime of this kind,
Found everywhere, but chiefly in the ring
Of the grave Elders, men unscoured, grotesque
In character, tricked out like aged trees
Which through the lapse of their infirmity
Give ready place to any random seed
That chooses to be reared upon their trunks.

Here on my view, confronting vividly
Those shepherd swains whom I had lately left
Appeared a different aspect of old age;
How different! yet both distinctly marked,
Objects embossed to catch the general eye,
Or portraitures for special use designed,
As some might seem, so aptly do they serve
To illustrate Nature's book of rudiments—
That book upheld as with maternal care
When she would enter on her tender scheme
Of teaching comprehension with delight,
And mingling playful with pathetic thoughts.

The surfaces of artificial life
And manners finely wrought, the delicate race
Of colours, lurking, gleaming up and down
Through that state arras woven with silk and gold;
This wily interchange of snaky hues,
Willingly or unwillingly revealed,
I neither knew nor cared for; and as such
Were wanting here, I took what might be found
Of less elaborate fabric. At this day
I smile, in many a mountain solitude
Conjuring up scenes as obsolete in freaks
Of character, in points of wit as broad,
As aught by wooden images performed
For entertainment of the gaping crowd
At wake or fair. And oftentimes do flit
Remembrances before me of old men—
Old humourists, who have been long in their graves,
And having almost in my mind put off
Their human names, have into phantoms passed
Of texture midway between life and books.

I play the loiterer: 'tis enough to note
That here in dwarf proportions were expressed
The limbs of the great world; its eager strifes
Collaterally pourtrayed, as in mock fight,
A tournament of blows, some hardly dealt
Though short of mortal combat; and whate'er
Might in this pageant be supposed to hit
An artless rustic's notice, this way less,
More that way, was not wasted upon me—
And yet the spectacle may well demand
A more substantial name, no mimic show,
Itself a living part of a live whole,
A creek in the vast sea; for, all degrees
And shapes of spurious fame and short-lived praise
Here sate in state, and fed with daily alms
Retainers won away from solid good;
And here was Labour, his own bond-slave; Hope,
That never set the pains against the prize;
Idleness halting with his weary clog,
And poor misguided Shame, and witless Fear,
And simple Pleasure foraging for Death;
Honour misplaced, and Dignity astray;

Feuds, factions, flatteries, enmity, and guile,
Murmuring submission, and bald government,
(The idol weak as the idolater),
And Decency and Custom starving Truth,
And blind Authority beating with his staff
The child that might have led him; Emptiness
Followed as of good omen, and meek Worth
Left to herself unheard of and unknown.

Of these and other kindred notices
I cannot say what portion is in truth
The naked recollection of that time,
And what may rather have been called to life
By after-meditation. But delight
That, in an easy temper lulled asleep,
Is still with Innocence its own reward,
This was not wanting. Carelessly I roamed
As through a wide museum from whose stores
A casual rarity is singled out
And has its brief perusal, then gives way
To others, all supplanted in their turn;
Till 'mid this crowded neighbourhood of things
That are by nature most unneighbourly,
The head turns round and cannot right itself;
And though an aching and a barren sense
Of gay confusion still be uppermost,
With few wise longings and but little love,
Yet to the memory something cleaves at last,
Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.

Thus in submissive idleness, my Friend!
The labouring time of autumn, winter, spring,
Eight months! rolled pleasingly away; the ninth
Came and returned me to my native hills.

Book Fourth

SUMMER VACATION

Bright was the summer's noon when quickening steps
Followed each other till a dreary moor
Was crossed, a bare ridge clomb, upon whose top
Standing alone, as from a rampart's edge,
I overlooked the bed of Windermere,
Like a vast river, stretching in the sun.
With exultation, at my feet I saw
Lake, islands, promontories, gleaming bays,
A universe of Nature's fairest forms
Proudly revealed with instantaneous burst,
Magnificent, and beautiful, and gay.
I bounded down the hill shouting amain
For the old Ferryman; to the shout the rocks
Replied, and when the Charon of the flood
Had staid his oars, and touched the jutting pier,
I did not step into the well-known boat
Without a cordial greeting. Thence with speed
Up the familiar hill I took my way
Towards that sweet Valley[1] where I had been reared;
'Twas but a short hour's walk, ere veering round
I saw the snow-white church upon her hill
Sit like a thronèd Lady, sending out
A gracious look all over her domain.
Yon azure smoke betrays the lurking town;
With eager footsteps I advance and reach
The cottage threshold where my journey closed.
Glad welcome had I, with some tears, perhaps,
From my old Dame, so kind and motherly,
While she perused me with a parent's pride.
The thoughts of gratitude shall fall like dew
Upon thy grave, good creature! While my heart
Can beat never will I forget thy name.
Heaven's blessing be upon thee where thou liest
After thy innocent and busy stir
In narrow cares, thy little daily growth
Of calm enjoyments, after eighty years,
And more than eighty, of untroubled life;
Childless, yet by the strangers to thy blood
Honoured with little less than filial love.
What joy was mine to see thee once again,
Thee and thy dwelling, and a crowd of things
About its narrow precincts all beloved,
And many of them seeming yet my own!
Why should I speak of what a thousand hearts
Have felt, and every man alive can guess?
The rooms, the court, the garden were not left

[1] Hawkshead.

Long unsaluted, nor the sunny seat
Round the stone table under the dark pine,
Friendly to studious or to festive hours;
Nor that unruly child of mountain birth,
The famous brook, who, soon as he was boxed
Within our garden, found himself at once,
As if by trick insidious and unkind,
Stripped of his voice and left to dimple down
(Without an effort and without a will)
A channel paved by man's officious care.
I looked at him and smiled, and smiled again,
And in the press of twenty thousand thoughts,
"Ha," quoth I, "pretty prisoner, are you there!"
Well might sarcastic Fancy then have whispered,
"An emblem here behold of thy own life;
In its late course of even days with all
Their smooth enthralment;" but the heart was full,
Too full for that reproach. My aged Dame
Walked proudly at my side: she guided me;
I willing, nay—nay, wishing to be led.
—The face of every neighbour whom I met
Was like a volume to me; some were hailed
Upon the road, some busy at their work,
Unceremonious greetings interchanged
With half the length of a long field between.
Among my schoolfellows I scattered round
Like recognitions, but with some constraint
Attended, doubtless, with a little pride,
But with more shame, for my habiliments,
The transformation wrought by gay attire.
Not less delighted did I take my place
At our domestic table: and, dear Friend!
In this endeavour simply to relate
A Poet's history, may I leave untold
The thankfulness with which I laid me down
In my accustomed bed, more welcome now
Perhaps than if it had been more desired
Or been more often thought of with regret;
That lowly bed whence I had heard the wind
Roar, and the rain beat hard; where I so oft
Had lain awake on summer nights to watch
The moon in splendour couched among the leaves
Of a tall ash, that near our cottage stood;
Had watched her with fixed eyes while to and fro
In the dark summit of the waving tree
She rocked with every impulse of the breeze.

Among the favourites whom it pleased me well
To see again, was one by ancient right
Our inmate, a rough terrier of the hills;
By birth and call of nature pre-ordained
To hunt the badger and unearth the fox
Among the impervious crags, but having been
From youth our own adopted, he had passed
Into a gentler service. And when first
The boyish spirit flagged, and day by day
Along my veins I kindled with the stir,
The fermentation, and the vernal heat
Of poesy, affecting private shades
Like a sick Lover, then this dog was used
To watch me, an attendant and a friend,
Obsequious to my steps early and late,
Though often of such dilatory walk
Tired, and uneasy at the halts I made.
A hundred times when, roving high and low,
I have been harassed with the toil of verse,
Much pains and little progress, and at once
Some lovely Image in the song rose up
Full-formed, like Venus rising from the sea;
Then have I darted forwards to let loose
My hand upon his back with stormy joy,
Caressing him again and yet again.
And when at evening on the public way
I sauntered, like a river murmuring
And talking to itself when all things else
Are still, the creature trotted on before;
Such was his custom; but whene'er he met
A passenger approaching, he would turn
To give me timely notice, and straightway,
Grateful for that admonishment, I hushed
My voice, composed my gait, and, with the air
And mien of one whose thoughts are free, advanced
To give and take a greeting that might save
My name from piteous rumours, such as wait
On men suspected to be crazed in brain.

Those walks well worthy to be prized and loved—

Regretted!—that word, too, was on my tongue,
But they were richly laden with all good,
And cannot be remembered but with thanks
And gratitude, and perfect joy of heart—
Those walks in all their freshness now came back
Like a returning Spring. When first I made
Once more the circuit of our little lake,
If ever happiness hath lodged with man,
That day consummate happiness was mine,
Wide-spreading, steady, calm, contemplative.
The sun was set, or setting, when I left
Our cottage door, and evening soon brought on
A sober hour, not winning or serene,
For cold and raw the air was, and untuned:
But as a face we love is sweetest then
When sorrow damps it, or, whatever look
It chance to wear, is sweetest if the heart
Have fulness in herself; even so with me
It fared that evening. Gently did my soul
Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood
Naked, as in the presence of her God.
While on I walked, a comfort seemed to touch
A heart that had not been disconsolate:
Strength came where weakness was not known to be,
At least not felt; and restoration came
Like an intruder knocking at the door
Of unacknowledged weariness. I took
The balance, and with firm hand weighed myself.
—Of that external scene which round me lay,
Little, in this abstraction, did I see;
Remembered less; but I had inward hopes
And swellings of the spirit, was rapt and soothed,
Conversed with promises, had glimmering views
How life pervades the undecaying mind;
How the immortal soul with God-like power
Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
That time can lay upon her; how on earth,
Man, if he do but live within the light
Of high endeavours, daily spreads abroad
His being armed with strength that cannot fail.
Nor was there want of milder thoughts, of love,
Of innocence, and holiday repose;
And more than pastoral quiet, 'mid the stir
Of boldest projects, and a peaceful end
At last, or glorious, by endurance won.
Thus musing, in a wood I sate me down
Alone, continuing there to muse: the slopes
And heights meanwhile were slowly overspread
With darkness, and before a rippling breeze
The long lake lengthened out its hoary line,
And in the sheltered coppice where I sate,
Around me from among the hazel leaves,
Now here, now there, moved by the straggling wind,
Came ever and anon a breath-like sound,
Quick as the pantings of the faithful dog,
The off and on companion of my walk;
And such, at times, believing them to be,
I turned my head to look if he were there;
Then into solemn thought I passed once more.

A freshness also found I at this time
In human Life, the daily life of those
Whose occupations really I loved;
The peaceful scene oft filled me with surprise
Changed like a garden in the heat of spring
After an eight-days' absence. For (to omit
The things which were the same and yet appeared
Far otherwise) amid this rural solitude,
A narrow Vale where each was known to all,
'Twas not indifferent to a youthful mind
To mark some sheltering bower or sunny nook
Where an old man had used to sit alone,
Now vacant; pale-faced babes whom I had left
In arms, now rosy prattlers at the feet
Of a pleased grandame tottering up and down;
And growing girls whose beauty, filched away
With all its pleasant promises, was gone
To deck some slighted playmate's homely cheek.

Yes, I had something of a subtler sense,
And often looking round was moved to smiles

Such as a delicate work of humour breeds;
I read, without design, the opinions, thoughts,
Of those plain-living people now observed
With clearer knowledge; with another eye
I saw the quiet woodman in the woods,
The shepherd roam the hills. With new delight,
This chiefly, did I note my grey-haired Dame;
Saw her go forth to church or other work
Of state equipped in monumental trim;
Short velvet cloak, (her bonnet of the like),
A mantle such as Spanish Cavaliers
Wore in old times. Her smooth domestic life,
Affectionate without disquietude,
Her talk, her business, pleased me; and no less
Her clear though shallow stream of piety
That ran on Sabbath days a fresher course;
With thoughts unfelt till now I saw her read
Her Bible on hot Sunday afternoons,
And loved the book, when she had dropped asleep
And made of it a pillow for her head.

Nor less do I remember to have felt,
Distinctly manifested at this time,
A human-heartedness about my love
For objects hitherto the absolute wealth
Of my own private being and no more;
Which I had loved, even as a blessed spirit
Or Angel, if he were to dwell on earth,
Might love in individual happiness.
But now there opened on me other thoughts
Of change, congratulation or regret,
A pensive feeling! It spread far and wide;
The trees, the mountains shared it, and the brooks,
The stars of Heaven, now seen in their old haunts—
White Sirius glittering o'er the southern crags,
Orion with his belt, and those fair Seven,
Acquaintances of every little child,
And Jupiter, my own belovèd star!
Whatever shadings of mortality,
Whatever imports from the world of death
Had come among these objects heretofore,
Were, in the main, of mood less tender: strong,
Deep, gloomy were they, and severe; the scatterings
Of awe or tremulous dread, that had given way
In later youth to yearnings of a love
Enthusiastic, to delight and hope.

As one who hangs down-bending from the side
Of a slow-moving boat, upon the breast
Of a still water, solacing himself
With such discoveries as his eye can make
Beneath him in the bottom of the deep,
Sees many beauteous sights—weeds, fishes, flowers,
Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies more,
Yet often is perplexed, and cannot part
The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,
Mountains and clouds, reflected in the depth
Of the clear flood, from things which there abide
In their true dwelling; now is crossed by gleam
Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
And wavering motions sent he knows not whence,
Impediments that make his task more sweet;
Such pleasant office have we long pursued
Incumbent o'er the surface of past time
With like success, nor often have appeared
Shapes fairer or less doubtfully discerned
Than these to which the Tale, indulgent Friend!
Would now direct thy notice. Yet in spite
Of pleasure won, and knowledge not withheld,
There was an inner falling off—I loved,
Loved deeply all that had been loved before,
More deeply even than ever: but a swarm
Of heady schemes jostling each other, gawds,
And feast and dance, and public revelry,
And sports and games (too grateful in themselves,
Yet in themselves less grateful, I believe,
Than as they were a badge glossy and fresh
Of manliness and freedom) all conspired
To lure my mind from firm habitual quest
Of feeding pleasures, to depress the zeal
And damp those yearnings which had once been mine—

A wild, unworldly-minded youth, given up
To his own eager thoughts. It would demand
Some skill, and longer time than may be spared
To paint these vanities, and how they wrought
In haunts where they, till now, had been unknown.
It seemed the very garments that I wore
Preyed on my strength, and stopped the quiet stream
Of self-forgetfulness.
Yes, that heartless chase
Of trivial pleasures was a poor exchange
For books and nature at that early age.
'Tis true, some casual knowledge might be gained
Of character or life; but at that time,
Of manners put to school I took small note,
And all my deeper passions lay elsewhere.
Far better had it been to exalt the mind
By solitary study, to uphold
Intense desire through meditative peace;
And yet, for chastisement of these regrets,
The memory of one particular hour
Doth here rise up against me. 'Mid a throng
Of maids and youths, old men, and matrons staid,
A medley of all tempers, I had passed
The night in dancing, gaiety, and mirth,
With din of instruments and shuffling feet,
And glancing forms, and tapers glittering,
And unaimed prattle flying up and down;
Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there
Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed,
Whose transient pleasure mounted to the head,
And tingled through the veins. Ere we retired,
The cock had crowed, and now the eastern sky
Was kindling, not unseen, from humble copse
And open field, through which the pathway wound,
And homeward led my steps. Magnificent
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld—in front,
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn—
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields.
Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.

Strange rendezvous! My mind was at that time
A parti-coloured show of grave and gay,
Solid and light, short-sighted and profound;
Of inconsiderate habits and sedate,
Consorting in one mansion unreproved.
The worth I knew of powers that I possessed,
Though slighted and too oft misused. Besides,
That summer, swarming as it did with thoughts
Transient and idle, lacked not intervals
When Folly from the frown of fleeting Time
Shrunk, and the mind experienced in herself
Conformity as just as that of old
To the end and written spirit of God's works,
Whether held forth in Nature or in Man,
Through pregnant vision, separate or conjoined.

When from our better selves we have too long
Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,
Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
How gracious, how benign, is Solitude;
How potent a mere image of her sway;
Most potent when impressed upon the mind
With an appropriate human centre—hermit,
Deep in the bosom of the wilderness;
Votary (in vast cathedral, where no foot
Is treading, where no other face is seen)
Kneeling at prayers; or watchman on the top

Of lighthouse, beaten by Atlantic waves;
Or as the soul of that great Power is met
Sometimes embodied on a public road,
When, for the night deserted, it assumes
A character of quiet more profound
Than pathless wastes.
Once, when those summer months
Were flown, and autumn brought its annual show
Of oars with oars contending, sails with sails,
Upon Winander's spacious breast, it chanced
That—after I had left a flower-decked room
(Whose in-door pastime, lighted up, survived
To a late hour), and spirits overwrought
Were making night do penance for a day
Spent in a round of strenuous idleness—
My homeward course led up a long ascent,
Where the road's watery surface, to the top
Of that sharp rising, glittered to the moon
And bore the semblance of another stream
Stealing with silent lapse to join the brook
That murmured in the vale. All else was still;
No living thing appeared in earth or air,
And, save the flowing water's peaceful voice,
Sound there was none—but, lo! an uncouth shape,
Shown by a sudden turning of the road,
So near that, slipping back into the shade
Of a thick hawthorn, I could mark him well,
Myself unseen. He was of stature tall,
A span above man's common measure, tall,
Stiff, lank, and upright; a more meagre man
Was never seen before by night or day.
Long were his arms, pallid his hands; his mouth
Looked ghastly in the moonlight: from behind,
A mile-stone propped him; I could also ken
That he was clothed in military garb,
Though faded, yet entire. Companionless,
No dog attending, by no staff sustained,
He stood, and in his very dress appeared
A desolation, a simplicity,
To which the trappings of a gaudy world
Make a strange back-ground. From his lips, ere long,
Issued low muttered sounds, as if of pain
Or some uneasy thought; yet still his form
Kept the same awful steadiness—at his feet
His shadow lay, and moved not. From self-blame
Not wholly free, I watched him thus; at length
Subduing my heart's specious cowardice,
I left the shady nook where I had stood
And hailed him. Slowly from his resting-place
He rose, and with a lean and wasted arm
In measured gesture lifted to his head
Returned my salutation; then resumed
His station as before; and when I asked
His history, the veteran, in reply,
Was neither slow nor eager; but, unmoved,
And with a quiet uncomplaining voice,
A stately air of mild indifference,
He told in few plain words a soldier's tale—
That in the Tropic Islands he had served,
Whence he had landed scarcely three weeks past;
That on his landing he had been dismissed,
And now was travelling towards his native home.
This heard, I said, in pity, "Come with me."
He stooped, and straightway from the ground took up
An oaken staff by me yet unobserved—
A staff which must have dropped from his slack hand
And lay till now neglected in the grass.
Though weak his step and cautious, he appeared
To travel without pain, and I beheld,
With an astonishment but ill suppressed,
His ghostly figure moving at my side;
Nor could I, while we journeyed thus, forbear
To turn from present hardships to the past,
And speak of war, battle, and pestilence,
Sprinkling this talk with questions, better spared,
On what he might himself have seen or felt.
He all the while was in demeanour calm,
Concise in answer; solemn and sublime
He might have seemed, but that in all he said
There was a strange half-absence, as of one
Knowing too well the importance of his theme,
But feeling it no longer. Our discourse
Soon ended, and together on we passed
In silence through a wood gloomy and still.
Up-turning, then, along an open field,

We reached a cottage. At the door I knocked,
And earnestly to charitable care
Commended him as a poor friendless man,
Belated and by sickness overcome.
Assured that now the traveller would repose
In comfort, I entreated that henceforth
He would not linger in the public ways,
But ask for timely furtherance and help
Such as his state required. At this reproof,
With the same ghastly mildness in his look,
He said, "My trust is in the God of Heaven,
And in the eye of him who passes me!"

The cottage door was speedily unbarred,
And now the soldier touched his hat once more
With his lean hand, and in a faltering voice,
Whose tone bespake reviving interests
Till then unfelt, he thanked me; I returned
The farewell blessing of the patient man,
And so we parted. Back I cast a look,
And lingered near the door a little space,
Then sought with quiet heart my distant home.

Book Fifth

BOOKS

When Contemplation, like the night-calm felt
Through earth and sky, spreads widely, and sends deep
Into the soul its tranquillising power,
Even then I sometimes grieve for thee, O Man,
Earth's paramount Creature! not so much for woes
That thou endurest; heavy though that weight be,
Cloud-like it mounts, or touched with light divine
Doth melt away; but for those palms achieved
Through length of time, by patient exercise
Of study and hard thought; there, there, it is
That sadness finds its fuel. Hitherto,
In progress through this Verse, my mind hath looked
Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven
As her prime teacher, intercourse with man
Established by the sovereign Intellect,
Who through that bodily image hath diffused,
As might appear to the eye of fleeting time,
A deathless spirit. Thou also, man! hast wrought,
For commerce of thy nature with herself,
Things that aspire to unconquerable life;
And yet we feel—we cannot choose but feel—
That they must perish. Tremblings of the heart
It gives, to think that our immortal being
No more shall need such garments; and yet man,
As long as he shall be the child of earth,
Might almost "weep to have" what he may lose,
Nor be himself extinguished, but survive,
Abject, depressed, forlorn, disconsolate.
A thought is with me sometimes, and I say,—
Should the whole frame of earth by inward throes
Be wrenched, or fire come down from far to scorch
Her pleasant habitations, and dry up
Old Ocean, in his bed left singed and bare,
Yet would the living Presence still subsist
Victorious, and composure would ensue,
And kindlings like the morning—presage sure
Of day returning and of life revived.
But all the meditations of mankind,
Yea, all the adamantine holds of truth
By reason built, or passion, which itself
Is highest reason in a soul sublime;
The consecrated works of Bard and Sage,
Sensuous or intellectual, wrought by men,
Twin labourers and heirs of the same hopes;
Where would they be? Oh! why hath not the Mind
Some element to stamp her image on
In nature somewhat nearer to her own?
Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad
Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail?

One day, when from my lips a like complaint
Had fallen in presence of a studious friend,
He with a smile made answer, that in truth
'Twas going far to seek disquietude;

But on the front of his reproof confessed
That he himself had oftentimes given way
To kindred hauntings. Whereupon I told,
That once in the stillness of a summer's noon,
While I was seated in a rocky cave
By the sea-side, perusing, so it chanced,
The famous history of the errant knight
Recorded by Cervantes, these same thoughts
Beset me, and to height unusual rose,
While listlessly I sate, and, having closed
The book, had turned my eyes toward the wide sea.
On poetry and geometric truth,
And their high privilege of lasting life,
From all internal injury exempt,
I mused; upon these chiefly: and at length,
My senses yielding to the sultry air,
Sleep seized me, and I passed into a dream.
I saw before me stretched a boundless plain
Of sandy wilderness, all black and void,
And as I looked around, distress and fear
Came creeping over me, when at my side,
Close at my side, an uncouth shape appeared
Upon a dromedary, mounted high.
He seemed an Arab of the Bedouin tribes:
A lance he bore, and underneath one arm
A stone, and in the opposite hand a shell
Of a surpassing brightness. At the sight
Much I rejoiced, not doubting but a guide
Was present, one who with unerring skill
Would through the desert lead me; and while yet
I looked and looked, self-questioned what this freight
Which the new-comer carried through the waste
Could mean, the Arab told me that the stone
(To give it in the language of the dream)
Was "Euclid's Elements," and "This," said he,
"Is something of more worth;" and at the word
Stretched forth the shell, so beautiful in shape,
In colour so resplendent, with command
That I should hold it to my ear. I did so,
And heard that instant in an unknown tongue,
Which yet I understood, articulate sounds,
A loud prophetic blast of harmony;
An Ode, in passion uttered, which foretold
Destruction to the children of the earth
By deluge, now at hand. No sooner ceased
The song, than the Arab with calm look declared
That all would come to pass of which the voice
Had given forewarning, and that he himself
Was going then to bury those two books:
The one that held acquaintance with the stars,
And wedded soul to soul in purest bond
Of reason, undisturbed by space or time;
The other that was a god, yea many gods,
Had voices more than all the winds, with power
To exhilarate the spirit, and to soothe,
Through every clime, the heart of human kind.
While this was uttering, strange as it may seem,
I wondered not, although I plainly saw
The one to be a stone, the other a shell;
Nor doubted once but that they both were books,
Having a perfect faith in all that passed.
Far stronger, now, grew the desire I felt
To cleave unto this man; but when I prayed
To share his enterprise, he hurried on
Reckless of me: I followed, not unseen,
For oftentimes he cast a backward look,
Grasping his twofold treasure.—Lance in rest,
He rode, I keeping pace with him; and now
He, to my fancy, had become the knight
Whose tale Cervantes tells; yet not the knight,
But was an Arab of the desert too;
Of these was neither, and was both at once.
His countenance, meanwhile, grew more disturbed;
And, looking backwards when he looked, mine eyes
Saw, over half the wilderness diffused,
A bed of glittering light: I asked the cause:
"It is," said he, "the waters of the deep
Gathering upon us;" quickening then the pace
Of the unwieldy creature he bestrode,
He left me: I called after him aloud;
He heeded not; but, with his twofold charge
Still in his grasp, before me, full in view,
Went hurrying o'er the illimitable waste,

With the fleet waters of a drowning world
In chase of him; whereat I waked in terror,
And saw the sea before me, and the book,
In which I had been reading, at my side.

Full often, taking from the world of sleep
This Arab phantom, which I thus beheld,
This semi-Quixote, I to him have given
A substance, fancied him a living man,
A gentle dweller in the desert, crazed
By love and feeling, and internal thought
Protracted among endless solitudes;
Have shaped him wandering upon this quest!
Nor have I pitied him; but rather felt
Reverence was due to a being thus employed;
And thought that, in the blind and awful lair
Of such a madness, reason did lie couched.
Enow there are on earth to take in charge
Their wives, their children, and their virgin loves,
Or whatsoever else the heart holds dear;
Enow to stir for these; yea, will I say,
Contemplating in soberness the approach
Of an event so dire, by signs in earth
Or heaven made manifest, that I could share
That maniac's fond anxiety, and go
Upon like errand. Oftentimes at least
Me hath such strong entrancement overcome,
When I have held a volume in my hand,
Poor earthly casket of immortal verse,
Shakespeare, or Milton, labourers divine!

Great and benign, indeed, must be the power
Of living nature, which could thus so long
Detain me from the best of other guides
And dearest helpers, left unthanked, unpraised,
Even in the time of lisping infancy;
And later down, in prattling childhood even,
While I was travelling back among those days,
How could I ever play an ingrate's part?
Once more should I have made those bowers resound,
By intermingling strains of thankfulness
With their own thoughtless melodies; at least
It might have well beseemed me to repeat
Some simply fashioned tale, to tell again,
In slender accents of sweet verse, some tale
That did bewitch me then, and soothes me now.
O Friend! O Poet! brother of my soul,
Think not that I could pass along untouched
By these remembrances. Yet wherefore speak?
Why call upon a few weak words to say
What is already written in the hearts
Of all that breathe?—what in the path of all
Drops daily from the tongue of every child,
Wherever man is found? The trickling tear
Upon the cheek of listening Infancy
Proclaims it, and the insuperable look
That drinks as if it never could be full.

That portion of my story I shall leave
There registered: whatever else of power
Or pleasure sown, or fostered thus, may be
Peculiar to myself, let that remain
Where still it works, though hidden from all search
Among the depths of time. Yet is it just
That here, in memory of all books which lay
Their sure foundations in the heart of man,
Whether by native prose, or numerous verse,
That in the name of all inspired souls—
From Homer the great Thunderer, from the voice
That roars along the bed of Jewish song,
And that more varied and elaborate,
Those trumpet-tones of harmony that shake
Our shores in England,—from those loftiest notes
Down to the low and wren-like warblings, made
For cottagers and spinners at the wheel,
And sun-burnt travellers resting their tired limbs,
Stretched under wayside hedge-rows, ballad tunes,
Food for the hungry ears of little ones,
And of old men who have survived their joys—
'Tis just that in behalf of these, the works,
And of the men that framed them, whether known
Or sleeping nameless in their scattered graves,
That I should here assert their rights, attest
Their honours, and should, once for all, pronounce
Their benediction; speak of them as Powers
For ever to be hallowed; only less,

For what we are and what we may become,
Than Nature's self, which is the breath of God,
Or His pure Word by miracle revealed.

Rarely and with reluctance would I stoop
To transitory themes; yet I rejoice,
And, by these thoughts admonished, will pour out
Thanks with uplifted heart, that I was reared
Safe from an evil which these days have laid
Upon the children of the land, a pest
That might have dried me up, body and soul.
This verse is dedicate to Nature's self,
And things that teach as Nature teaches: then,
Oh! where had been the Man, the Poet where,
Where had we been, we two, belovèd Friend!
If in the season of unperilous choice,
In lieu of wandering, as we did, through vales
Rich with indigenous produce, open ground
Of Fancy, happy pastures ranged at will,
We had been followed, hourly watched, and noosed,
Each in his several melancholy walk
Stringed like a poor man's heifer at its feed,
Led through the lanes in forlorn servitude;
Or rather like a stallèd ox debarred
From touch of growing grass, that may not taste
A flower till it have yielded up its sweets
A prelibation to the mower's scythe.

Behold the parent hen amid her brood,
Though fledged and feathered, and well pleased to part
And straggle from her presence, still a brood,
And she herself from the maternal bond
Still undischarged; yet doth she little more
Than move with them in tenderness and love,
A centre to the circle which they make;
And now and then, alike from need of theirs
And call of her own natural appetites,
She scratches, ransacks up the earth for food,
Which they partake at pleasure. Early died
My honoured Mother, she who was the heart
And hinge of all our learnings and our loves:
She left us destitute, and, as we might,
Trooping together. Little suits it me
To break upon the sabbath of her rest
With any thought that looks at others' blame;
Nor would I praise her but in perfect love.
Hence am I checked: but let me boldly say,
In gratitude, and for the sake of truth,
Unheard by her, that she, not falsely taught,
Fetching her goodness rather from times past,
Than shaping novelties for times to come,
Had no presumption, no such jealousy,
Nor did by habit of her thoughts mistrust
Our nature, but had virtual faith that He
Who fills the mother's breast with innocent milk,
Doth also for our nobler part provide,
Under His great correction and control,
As innocent instincts, and as innocent food;
Or draws, for minds that are left free to trust
In the simplicities of opening life,
Sweet honey out of spurned or dreaded weeds.
This was her creed, and therefore she was pure
From anxious fear of error or mishap,
And evil, overweeningly so called;
Was not puffed up by false unnatural hopes,
Nor selfish with unnecessary cares,
Nor with impatience from the season asked
More than its timely produce; rather loved
The hours for what they are, than from regard
Glanced on their promises in restless pride.
Such was she—not from faculties more strong
Than others have, but from the times, perhaps,
And spot in which she lived, and through a grace
Of modest meekness, simple-mindedness,
A heart that found benignity and hope,
Being itself benign.

My drift I fear
Is scarcely obvious; but, that common sense
May try this modern system by its fruits,
Leave let me take to place before her sight
A specimen pourtrayed with faithful hand.
Full early trained to worship seemliness,
This model of a child is never known
To mix in quarrels; that were far beneath
Its dignity; with gifts he bubbles o'er
As generous as a fountain; selfishness
May not come near him, nor the little throng
Of flitting pleasures tempt him from his path;
The wandering beggars propagate his name,
Dumb creatures find him tender as a nun,
And natural or supernatural fear,
Unless it leap upon him in a dream,
Touches him not. To enhance the wonder, see
How arch his notices, how nice his sense
Of the ridiculous; not blind is he
To the broad follies of the licensed world,
Yet innocent himself withal, though shrewd,
And can read lectures upon innocence;
A miracle of scientific lore,
Ships he can guide across the pathless sea,
And tell you all their cunning; he can read
The inside of the earth, and spell the stars;
He knows the policies of foreign lands;
Can string you names of districts, cities, towns,
The whole world over, tight as beads of dew
Upon a gossamer thread; he sifts, he weighs;
All things are put to question; he must live
Knowing that he grows wiser every day
Or else not live at all, and seeing too
Each little drop of wisdom as it falls
Into the dimpling cistern of his heart:
For this unnatural growth the trainer blame,
Pity the tree.—Poor human vanity,
Wert thou extinguished, little would be left
Which he could truly love; but how escape?
For, ever as a thought of purer birth
Rises to lead him toward a better clime,
Some intermeddler still is on the watch
To drive him back, and pound him, like a stray,
Within the pinfold of his own conceit.
Meanwhile old grandame earth is grieved to find
The playthings, which her love designed for him,
Unthought of: in their woodland beds the flowers
Weep, and the river sides are all forlorn.
Oh! give us once again the wishing-cap
Of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat
Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,
And Sabra in the forest with St. George!
The child, whose love is here, at least, doth reap
One precious gain, that he forgets himself.

These mighty workmen of our later age,
Who, with a broad highway, have overbridged
The froward chaos of futurity,
Tamed to their bidding; they who have the skill
To manage books, and things, and make them act
On infant minds as surely as the sun
Deals with a flower; the keepers of our time,
The guides and wardens of our faculties,
Sages who in their prescience would control
All accidents, and to the very road
Which they have fashioned would confine us down,
Like engines; when will their presumption learn,
That in the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser spirit is at work for us,
A better eye than theirs, most prodigal
Of blessings, and most studious of our good,
Even in what seem our most unfruitful hours?

[1] There was a Boy: ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many a time
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone
Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,

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[1] See p. 113.

And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him; and they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
And long halloos and screams, and echoes loud,
Redoubled and redoubled, concourse wild
Of jocund din; and, when a lengthened pause
Of silence came and baffled his best skill,
Then sometimes, in that silence while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind,
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This Boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Fair is the spot, most beautiful the vale
Where he was born; the grassy churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village school,
And through that churchyard when my way has led
On summer evenings, I believe that there
A long half hour together I have stood
Mute, looking at the grave in which he lies!
Even now appears before the mind's clear eye
That self-same village church; I see her sit
(The thronèd Lady whom erewhile we hailed)
On her green hill, forgetful of this Boy
Who slumbers at her feet,—forgetful, too,
Of all her silent neighbourhood of graves,
And listening only to the gladsome sounds
That, from the rural school ascending, play
Beneath her and about her. May she long
Behold a race of young ones like to those
With whom I herded!—(easily, indeed,
We might have fed upon a fatter soil
Of arts and letters—but be that forgiven)—
A race of real children; not too wise,
Too learned, or too good; but wanton, fresh,
And bandied up and down by love and hate;
Not unresentful where self-justified;
Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy;
Mad at their sports like withered leaves in winds;
Though doing wrong and suffering, and full oft
Bending beneath our life's mysterious weight
Of pain, and doubt, and fear, yet yielding not
In happiness to the happiest upon earth.
Simplicity in habit, truth in speech,
Be these the daily strengtheners of their minds;
May books and Nature be their early joy!
And knowledge, rightly honoured with that name—
Knowledge not purchased by the loss of power!

Well do I call to mind the very week
When I was first intrusted to the care
Of that sweet Valley; when its paths, its shores,
And brooks were like a dream of novelty
To my half-infant thoughts; that very week,
While I was roving up and down alone,
Seeking I knew not what, I chanced to cross
One of those open fields, which, shaped like ears,
Make green peninsulas on Esthwaite's Lake:
Twilight was coming on, yet through the gloom
Appeared distinctly on the opposite shore
A heap of garments, as if left by one
Who might have there been bathing. Long I watched,
But no one owned them; meanwhile the calm lake
Grew dark with all the shadows on its breast,
And, now and then, a fish up-leaping snapped
The breathless stillness. The succeeding day,
Those unclaimed garments telling a plain tale

Drew to the spot an anxious crowd; some looked
In passive expectation from the shore,
While from a boat others hung o'er the deep,
Sounding with grappling irons and long poles.
At last, the dead man, 'mid that beauteous scene
Of trees and hills and water, bolt upright
Rose, with his ghastly face, a spectre shape
Of terror; yet no soul-debasing fear,
Young as I was, a child not nine years old,
Possessed me, for my inner eye had seen
Such sights before, among the shining streams
Of faëry land, the forest of romance.
Their spirit hallowed the sad spectacle
With decoration of ideal grace;
A dignity, a smoothness, like the works
Of Grecian art, and purest poesy.

A precious treasure had I long possessed,
A little yellow, canvas-covered book,
A slender abstract of the Arabian tales;
And, from companions in a new abode,
When first I learnt, that this dear prize of mine
Was but a block hewn from a mighty quarry—
That there were four large volumes, laden all
With kindred matter, 'twas to me, in truth,
A promise scarcely earthly. Instantly,
With one not richer than myself, I made
A covenant that each should lay aside
The moneys he possessed, and hoard up more,
Till our joint savings had amassed enough
To make this book our own. Through several months,
In spite of all temptation, we preserved
Religiously that vow; but firmness failed,
Nor were we ever masters of our wish.

And when thereafter to my father's house
The holidays returned me, there to find
That golden store of books which I had left,
What joy was mine! How often in the course
Of those glad respites, though a soft west wind
Ruffled the waters to the angler's wish,
For a whole day together, have I lain
Down by thy side, O Derwent! murmuring stream,
On the hot stones, and in the glaring sun,
And there have read, devouring as I read,
Defrauding the day's glory, desperate!
Till with a sudden bound of smart reproach,
Such as an idler deals with in his shame,
I to the sport betook myself again.

A gracious spirit o'er this earth presides,
And o'er the heart of man; invisibly
It comes, to works of unreproved delight,
And tendency benign, directing those
Who care not, know not, think not, what they do.
The tales that charm away the wakeful night
In Araby, romances; legends penned
For solace by dim light of monkish lamps;
Fictions, for ladies of their love, devised
By youthful squires; adventures endless, spun
By the dismantled warrior in old age,
Out of the bowels of those very schemes
In which his youth did first extravagate;
These spread like day, and something in the shape
Of these will live till man shall be no more.
Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites, are ours,
And *they must* have their food. Our childhood sits,
Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne
That hath more power than all the elements.
I guess not what this tells of Being past,
Nor what it augurs of the life to come;
But so it is; and, in that dubious hour—
That twilight—when we first begin to see
This dawning earth, to recognise, expect,
And, in the long probation that ensues,
The time of trial, ere we learn to live
In reconcilement with our stinted powers;
To endure this state of meagre vassalage,
Unwilling to forego, confess, submit,
Uneasy and unsettled, yoke-fellows
To custom, mettlesome, and not yet tamed
And humbled down—oh! then we feel, we feel,
We know where we have friends. Ye dreamers, then,
Forgers of daring tales! we bless you then,
Impostors, drivellers, dotards, as the ape
Philosophy will call you: *then* we feel
With what, and how great might ye are in league,

Who make our wish, our power, our thought a deed,
An empire, a possession,—ye whom time
And seasons serve; all Faculties to whom
Earth crouches, the elements are potter's clay,
Space like a heaven filled up with northern lights,
Here, nowhere, there, and everywhere at once.

Relinquishing this lofty eminence
For ground, though humbler, not the less a tract
Of the same isthmus, which our spirits cross
In progress from their native continent
To earth and human life, the Song might dwell
On that delightful time of growing youth,
When craving for the marvellous gives way
To strengthening love for things that we have seen;
When sober truth and steady sympathies,
Offered to notice by less daring pens,
Take firmer hold of us, and words themselves
Move us with conscious pleasure.
I am sad
At thought of rapture now for ever flown;
Almost to tears I sometimes could be sad
To think of, to read over, many a page,
Poems withal of name, which at that time
Did never fail to entrance me, and are now
Dead in my eyes, dead as a theatre
Fresh emptied of spectators. Twice five years
Or less I might have seen, when first my mind
With conscious pleasure opened to the charm
Of words in tuneful order, found them sweet
For their own *sakes*, a passion, and a power;
And phrases pleased me chosen for delight,
For pomp, or love. Oft, in the public roads
Yet unfrequented, while the morning light
Was yellowing the hill tops, I went abroad
With a dear friend, and for the better part
Of two delightful hours we strolled along
By the still borders of the misty lake,
Repeating favourite verses with one voice,
Or conning more, as happy as the birds
That round us chaunted. Well might we be glad,
Lifted above the ground by airy fancies,
More bright than madness or the dreams of wine;
And, though full oft the objects of our love
Were false, and in their splendour overwrought,
Yet was there surely then no vulgar power
Working within us,—nothing less, in truth,
Than that most noble attribute of man,
Though yet untutored and inordinate,
That wish for something loftier, more adorned,
Than is the common aspect, daily garb,
Of human life. What wonder, then, if sounds
Of exultation echoed through the groves!
For, images, and sentiments, and words,
And everything encountered or pursued
In that delicious world of poesy,
Kept holiday, a never-ending show,
With music, incense, festival, and flowers!

Here must we pause: this only let me add,
From heart-experience, and in humblest sense
Of modesty, that he, who in his youth
A daily wanderer among woods and fields
With living Nature hath been intimate,
Not only in that raw unpractised time
Is stirred to ecstasy, as others are,
By glittering verse; but further, doth receive,
In measure only dealt out to himself,
Knowledge and increase of enduring joy
From the great Nature that exists in works
Of mighty Poets. Visionary power
Attends the motions of the viewless winds,
Embodied in the mystery of words:
There, darkness makes abode, and all the host
Of shadowy things work endless changes,—there,
As in a mansion like their proper home,
Even forms and substances are circumfused
By that transparent veil with light divine,
And, through the turnings intricate of verse,
Present themselves as objects recognised,
In flashes, and with glory not their own.

BOOK SIXTH

CAMBRIDGE AND THE ALPS

THE leaves were fading when to Esthwaite's banks

And the simplicities of cottage life
I bade farewell; and, one among the youth
Who, summoned by that season, reunite
As scattered birds troop to the fowler's lure,
Went back to Granta's cloisters, not so prompt
Or eager, though as gay and undepressed
In mind, as when I thence had taken flight
A few short months before. I turned my face
Without repining from the coves and heights
Clothed in the sunshine of the withering fern;
Quitted, not loth, the mild magnificence
Of calmer lakes and louder streams; and you,
Frank-hearted maids of rocky Cumberland,
You and your not unwelcome days of mirth,
Relinquished, and your nights of revelry,
And in my own unlovely cell sate down
In lightsome mood—such privilege has youth
That cannot take long leave of pleasant thoughts.

The bonds of indolent society
Relaxing in their hold, henceforth I lived
More to myself. Two winters may be passed
Without a separate notice: many books
Were skimmed, devoured, or studiously perused,
But with no settled plan. I was detached
Internally from academic cares;
Yet independent study seemed a course
Of hardy disobedience toward friends
And kindred, proud rebellion and unkind.
This spurious virtue, rather let it bear
A name it now deserves, this cowardice,
Gave treacherous sanction to that over-love
Of freedom which encouraged me to turn
From regulations even of my own
As from restraints and bonds. Yet who can tell—
Who knows what thus may have been gained, both then
And at a later season, or preserved;
What love of nature, what original strength
Of contemplation, what intuitive truths
The deepest and the best, what keen research,
Unbiassed, unbewildered, and unawed?
The Poet's soul was with me at that time;
Sweet meditations, the still overflow
Of present happiness, while future years
Lacked not anticipations, tender dreams,
No few of which have since been realised;
And some remain, hopes for my future life.
Four years and thirty, told this very week,
Have I been now a sojourner on earth,
By sorrow not unsmitten; yet for me
Life's morning radiance hath not left the hills,
Her dew is on the flowers. Those were the days
Which also first emboldened me to trust
With firmness, hitherto but slightly touched
By such a daring thought, that I might leave
Some monument behind me which pure hearts
Should reverence. The instinctive humbleness,
Maintained even by the very name and thought
Of printed books and authorship, began
To melt away; and further, the dread awe
Of mighty names was softened down and seemed
Approachable, admitting fellowship
Of modest sympathy. Such aspect now,
Though not familiarly, my mind put on,
Content to observe, to achieve, and to enjoy.

All winter long, whenever free to choose,
Did I by night frequent the College grove
And tributary walks; the last, and oft
The only one, who had been lingering there
Through hours of silence, till the porter's bell,
A punctual follower on the stroke of nine,
Rang with its blunt unceremonious voice;
Inexorable summons! Lofty elms,
Inviting shades of opportune recess,
Bestowed composure on a neighbourhood
Unpeaceful in itself. A single tree
With sinuous trunk, boughs exquisitely wreathed,
Grew there; an ash which Winter for himself
Decked out with pride, and with outlandish grace:
Up from the ground, and almost to the top,

The trunk and every master branch were green
With clustering ivy, and the lightsome twigs
And outer spray profusely tipped with seeds
That hung in yellow tassels, while the air
Stirred them, not voiceless. Often have I stood
Foot-bound uplooking at this lovely tree
Beneath a frosty moon. The hemisphere
Of magic fiction, verse of mine perchance
May never tread; but scarcely Spenser's self
Could have more tranquil visions in his youth,
Or could more bright appearances create
Of human forms with superhuman powers,
Than I beheld, loitering on calm clear nights
Alone, beneath this fairy work of earth.

On the vague reading of a truant youth
'Twere idle to descant. My inner judgment
Not seldom differed from my taste in books,
As if it appertained to another mind,
And yet the books which then I valued most
Are dearest to me *now;* for, having scanned,
Not heedlessly, the laws, and watched the forms
Of Nature, in that knowledge I possessed
A standard, often usefully applied,
Even when unconsciously, to things removed
From a familiar sympathy.—In fine,
I was a better judge of thoughts than words,
Misled in estimating words, not only
By common inexperience of youth,
But by the trade in classic niceties,
The dangerous craft, of culling term and phrase
From languages that want the living voice
To carry meaning to the natural heart;
To tell us what is passion, what is truth,
What reason, what simplicity and sense.

Yet may we not entirely overlook
The pleasure gathered from the rudiments
Of geometric science. Though advanced
In these enquiries, with regret I speak,
No farther than the threshold, there I found
Both elevation and composed delight:
With Indian awe and wonder, ignorance pleased
With its own struggles, did I meditate
On the relation those abstractions bear
To Nature's laws, and by what process led,
Those immaterial agents bowed their heads
Duly to serve the mind of earth-born man;
From star to star, from kindred sphere to sphere,
From system on to system without end.

More frequently from the same source I drew
A pleasure quiet and profound, a sense
Of permanent and universal sway,
And paramount belief; there, recognised
A type, for finite natures, of the one
Supreme Existence, the surpassing life
Which—to the boundaries of space and time,
Of melancholy space and doleful time,
Superior and incapable of change,
Nor touched by welterings of passion—is,
And hath the name of, God. Transcendent peace
And silence did await upon these thoughts
That were a frequent comfort to my youth.

'Tis told by one whom stormy waters threw,
With fellow-sufferers by the shipwreck spared,
Upon a desert coast, that having brought
To land a single volume, saved by chance,
A treatise of Geometry, he wont,
Although of food and clothing destitute,
And beyond common wretchedness depressed,
To part from company and take this book
(Then first a self-taught pupil in its truths)
To spots remote, and draw his diagrams
With a long staff upon the sand, and thus
Did oft beguile his sorrow, and almost
Forget his feeling: so (if like effect
From the same cause produced, 'mid outward things
So different, may rightly be compared),
So was it then with me, and so will be
With Poets ever. Mighty is the charm
Of those abstractions to a mind beset
With images and haunted by herself,
And specially delightful unto me
Was that clear synthesis built up aloft
So gracefully; even then when it appeared
Not more than a mere plaything, or a toy
To sense embodied: not the thing it is

In verity, an independent world,
Created out of pure intelligence.

Such dispositions then were mine unearned
By aught, I fear, of genuine desert—
Mine, through heaven's grace and inborn aptitudes.
And not to leave the story of that time
Imperfect, with these habits must be joined,
Moods melancholy, fits of spleen, that loved
A pensive sky, sad days, and piping winds,
The twilight more than dawn, autumn than spring;
A treasured and luxurious gloom of choice
And inclination mainly, and the mere
Redundancy of youth's contentedness.
—To time thus spent, add multitudes of hours
Pilfered away, by what the Bard who sang
Of the Enchanter Indolence hath called
"Good-natured lounging," and behold a map
Of my collegiate life—far less intense
Than duty called for, or, without regard
To duty, *might* have sprung up of itself
By change of accidents, or even, to speak
Without unkindness, in another place.
Yet why take refuge in that plea?—the fault,
This I repeat, was mine; mine be the blame.

In summer, making quest for works of art,
Or scenes renowned for beauty, I explored
That streamlet whose blue current works its way
Between romantic Dovedale's spiry rocks;
Pried into Yorkshire dales, or hidden tracts
Of my own native region, and was blest
Between these sundry wanderings with a joy
Above all joys, that seemed another morn
Risen on mid noon; blest with the presence, Friend
Of that sole Sister, her who hath been long
Dear to thee also, thy true friend and mine,
Now, after separation desolate,
Restored to me—such absence that she seemed
A gift then first bestowed. The varied banks
Of Emont, hitherto unnamed in song,
And that monastic castle, 'mid tall trees,
Low standing by the margin of the stream,
A mansion visited (as fame reports)
By Sidney, where, in sight of our Helvellyn,
Or stormy Cross-fell, snatches he might pen
Of his Arcadia, by fraternal love
Inspired;—that river and those mouldering towers
Have seen us side by side, when, having clomb
The darksome windings of a broken stair,
And crept along a ridge of fractured wall,
Not without trembling, we in safety looked
Forth, through some Gothic window's open space,
And gathered with one mind a rich reward
From the far-stretching landscape, by the light
Of morning beautified, or purple eve;
Or, not less pleased, lay on some turret's head,
Catching from tufts of grass and hare-bell flowers
Their faintest whisper to the passing breeze,
Given out while mid-day heat oppressed the plains.

Another maid there was, who also shed
A gladness o'er that season, then to me,
By her exulting outside look of youth
And placid under-countenance, first endeared;
That other spirit, Coleridge! who is now
So near to us, that meek confiding heart,
So reverenced by us both. O'er paths and fields
In all that neighbourhood, through narrow lanes
Of eglantine, and through the shady woods,
And o'er the Border Beacon, and the waste
Of naked pools, and common crags that lay
Exposed on the bare fell, were scattered love,
The spirit of pleasure, and youth's golden gleam.
O Friend! we had not seen thee at that time,
And yet a power is on me, and a strong
Confusion, and I seem to plant thee there.
Far art thou wandered now in search of health
And milder breezes,—melancholy lot!
But thou art with us, with us in the past,
The present, with us in the times to come.

There is no grief, no sorrow, no despair,
No languor, no dejection, no dismay,
No absence scarcely can there be, for those
Who love as we do. Speed thee well! divide
With us thy pleasure; thy returning strength,
Receive it daily as a joy of ours;
Share with us thy fresh spirits, whether gift
Of gales Etesian or of tender thoughts.

I, too, have been a wanderer; but, alas!
How different the fate of different men.
Though mutually unknown, yea nursed and reared
As if in several elements, we were framed
To bend at last to the same discipline,
Predestined, if two beings ever were,
To seek the same delights, and have one health,
One happiness. Throughout this narrative,
Else sooner ended, I have borne in mind
For whom it registers the birth, and marks the growth,
Of gentleness, simplicity, and truth,
And joyous loves, that hallow innocent days
Of peace and self-command. Of rivers, fields,
And groves I speak to thee, my Friend! to thee,
Who, yet a liveried schoolboy, in the depths
Of the huge city, on the leaded roof
Of that wide edifice, thy school and home,
Wert used to lie and gaze upon the clouds
Moving in heaven; or, of that pleasure tired,
To shut thine eyes, and by internal light
See trees, and meadows, and thy native stream,
Far distant, thus beheld from year to year
Of a long exile. Nor could I forget,
In this late portion of my argument,
That scarcely, as my term of pupilage
Ceased, had I left those academic bowers
When thou wert thither guided. From the heart
Of London, and from cloisters there, thou camest,
And didst sit down in temperance and peace,
A rigorous student. What a stormy course
Then followed. Oh! it is a pang that calls
For utterance, to think what easy change
Of circumstances might to thee have spared
A world of pain, ripened a thousand hopes,
For ever withered. Through this retrospect
Of my collegiate life I still have had
Thy after-sojourn in the self-same place
Present before my eyes, have played with times
And accidents as children do with cards,
Or as a man, who, when his house is built,
A frame locked up in wood and stone, doth still,
As impotent fancy prompts, by his fireside,
Rebuild it to his liking. I have thought
Of thee, thy learning, gorgeous eloquence,
And all the strength and plumage of thy youth,
Thy subtle speculations, toils abstruse
Among the schoolmen, and Platonic forms
Of wild ideal pageantry, shaped out
From things well-matched or ill, and words for things,
The self-created sustenance of a mind
Debarred from Nature's living images,
Compelled to be a life unto herself,
And unrelentingly possessed by thirst
Of greatness, love, and beauty. Not alone,
Ah! surely not in singleness of heart
Should I have seen the light of evening fade
From smooth Cam's silent waters: had we met,
Even at that early time, needs must I trust
In the belief, that my maturer age,
My calmer habits, and more steady voice,
Would with an influence benign have soothed,
Or chased away, the airy wretchedness
That battened on thy youth. But thou hast trod
A march of glory, which doth put to shame
These vain regrets; health suffers in thee, else
Such grief for thee would be the weakest thought
That ever harboured in the breast of man.

A passing word erewhile did lightly touch
On wanderings of my own, that now embraced
With livelier hope a region wider far.

When the third summer freed us from restraint,

A youthful friend, he too a mountaineer,
Not slow to share my wishes, took his staff,
And sallying forth, we journeyed side by side,
Bound to the distant Alps. A hardy slight,
Did this unprecedented course imply,
Of college studies and their set rewards;
Nor had, in truth, the scheme been formed by me
Without uneasy forethought of the pain,
The censures, and ill-omening, of those
To whom my worldly interests were dear.
But Nature then was sovereign in my mind,
And mighty forms, seizing a youthful fancy,
Had given a charter to irregular hopes.
In any age of uneventful calm
Among the nations, surely would my heart
Have been possessed by similar desire;
But Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,
France standing on the top of golden hours,
And human nature seeming born again.

Lightly equipped, and but a few brief looks
Cast on the white cliffs of our native shore
From the receding vessel's deck, we chanced
To land at Calais on the very eve
Of that great federal day; and there we saw,
In a mean city, and among a few,
How bright a face is worn when joy of one
Is joy for tens of millions. Southward thence
We held our way, direct through hamlets, towns,
Gaudy with reliques of that festival,
Flowers left to wither on triumphal arcs,
And window-garlands. On the public roads,
And, once, three days successively, through paths
By which our toilsome journey was abridged,
Among sequestered villages we walked
And found benevolence and blessedness
Spread like a fragrance everywhere, when spring
Hath left no corner of the land untouched;
Where elms for many and many a league in files
With their thin umbrage, on the stately roads
Of that great kingdom, rustled o'er our heads,
For ever near us as we paced along:
How sweet at such a time, with such delight
On every side, in prime of youthful strength,
To feed a Poet's tender melancholy
And fond conceit of sadness, with the sound
Of undulations varying as might please
The wind that swayed them; once, and more than once,
Unhoused beneath the evening star we saw
Dances of liberty, and, in late hours
Of darkness, dances in the open air
Deftly prolonged, though grey-haired lookers on
Might waste their breath in chiding.
                                                  Under hills—
The vine-clad hills and slopes of Burgundy,
Upon the bosom of the gentle Saone
We glided forward with the flowing stream.
Swift Rhone! thou wert the *wings* on which we cut
A winding passage with majestic ease
Between thy lofty rocks. Enchanting show
Those woods and farms and orchards did present,
And single cottages and lurking towns,
Reach after reach, succession without end
Of deep and stately vales! A lonely pair
Of strangers, till day closed, we sailed along
Clustered together with a merry crowd
Of those emancipated, a blithe host
Of travellers, chiefly delegates, returning
From the great spousals newly solemnised
At their chief city, in the sight of Heaven.
Like bees they swarmed, gaudy and gay as bees;
Some vapoured in the unruliness of joy,
And with their swords flourished as if to fight
The saucy air. In this proud company
We landed—took with them our evening meal,
Guests welcome almost as the angels were
To Abraham of old. The supper done,
With flowing cups elate and happy thoughts
We rose at signal given, and formed a ring
And, hand in hand, danced round and round the board;
All hearts were open, every tongue was loud
With amity and glee; we bore a name
Honoured in France, the name of Englishmen,
And hospitably did they give us hail,

As their forerunners in a glorious course;
And round and round the board we danced again.
With these blithe friends our voyage we renewed
At early dawn. The monastery bells
Made a sweet jingling in our youthful ears;
The rapid river flowing without noise,
And each uprising or receding spire
Spake with a sense of peace, at intervals
Touching the heart amid the boisterous crew
By whom we were encompassed. Taking leave
Of this glad throng, foot-travellers side by side,
Measuring our steps in quiet, we pursued
Our journey, and ere twice the sun had set
Beheld the Convent of Chartreuse, and there
Rested within an awful *solitude:*
Yes; for even then no other than a place
Of soul-affecting *solitude* appeared
That far-famed region, though our eyes had seen,
As toward the sacred mansion we advanced,
Arms flashing, and a military glare
Of riotous men commissioned to expel
The blameless inmates, and belike subvert
That frame of social being, which so long
Had bodied forth the ghostliness of things
In silence visible and perpetual calm.
—"Stay, stay your sacrilegious hands!"—The voice
Was Nature's, uttered from her Alpine throne;
I heard it then and seem to hear it now—
"Your impious work forbear, perish what may,
Let this one temple last, be this one spot
Of earth devoted to eternity!"
She ceased to speak, but while St. Bruno's pines
Waved their dark tops, not silent as they waved,
And while below, along their several beds,
Murmured the sister streams of Life and Death,
Thus by conflicting passions pressed, my heart
Responded; "Honour to the patriot's zeal!
Glory and hope to new-born Liberty!
Hail to the mighty projects of the time!
Discerning sword that Justice wields, do thou
Go forth and prosper; and, ye purging fires,
Up to the loftiest towers of Pride ascend,
Fanned by the breath of angry Providence.
But oh! if Past and Future be the wings
On whose support harmoniously conjoined
Moves the great spirit of human knowledge, spare
These courts of mystery, where a step advanced
Between the portals of the shadowy rocks
Leaves far behind life's treacherous vanities,
For penitential tears and trembling hopes
Exchanged—to equalise in God's pure sight
Monarch and peasant: be the house redeemed
With its unworldly votaries, for the sake
Of conquest over sense, hourly achieved
Through faith and meditative reason, resting
Upon the word of heaven-imparted truth,
Calmly triumphant; and for humbler claim
Of that imaginative impulse sent
From these majestic floods, yon shining cliffs,
The untransmuted shapes of many worlds,
Cerulean ether's pure inhabitants,
These forests unapproachable by death,
That shall endure as long as man endures,
To think, to hope, to worship, and to feel,
To struggle, to be lost within himself
In trepidation, from the blank abyss
To look with bodily eyes, and be consoled."
Not seldom since that moment have I wished
That thou, O Friend! the trouble or the calm
Hadst shared, when, from profane regards apart,
In sympathetic reverence we trod
The floors of those dim cloisters, till that hour,
From their foundation, strangers to the presence
Of unrestricted and unthinking man.
Abroad, how cheeringly the sunshine lay
Upon the open lawns! Vallombre's groves
Entering, we fed the soul with darkness; thence
Issued, and with uplifted eyes beheld,
In different quarters of the bending sky,
The cross of Jesus stand erect, as if
Hands of angelic powers had fixed it there

Memorial reverenced by a thousand storms;
Yet then, from the undiscriminating sweep
And rage of one State-whirlwind, insecure.

'Tis not my present purpose to retrace
That variegated journey step by step.
A march it was of military speed,
And Earth did change her images and forms
Before us, fast as clouds are changed in heaven.
Day after day, up early and down late,
From hill to vale we dropped, from vale to hill
Mounted—from province on to province swept,
Keen hunters in a chase of fourteen weeks,
Eager as birds of prey, or as a ship
Upon the stretch, when winds are blowing fair:
Sweet coverts did we cross of pastoral life,
Enticing valleys, greeted them and left
Too soon, while yet the very flash and gleam
Of salutation were not passed away.
Oh! sorrow for the youth who could have seen,
Unchastened, unsubdued, unawed, unraised
To patriarchal dignity of mind,
And pure simplicity of wish and will,
Those sanctified abodes of peaceful man,
Pleased (though to hardship born, and compassed round
With danger, varying as the seasons change),
Pleased with his daily task, or, if not pleased,
Contented, from the moment that the dawn
(Ah! surely not without attendant gleams
Of soul-illumination) calls him forth
To industry, by glistenings flung on rocks,
Whose evening shadows lead him to repose.

Well might a stranger look with bounding heart
Down on a green recess, the first I saw
Of those deep haunts, an aboriginal vale,
Quiet and lorded over and possessed
By naked huts, wood-built, and sown like tents
Or Indian cabins over the fresh lawns
And by the river side.
That very day,
From a bare ridge we also first beheld
Unveiled the summit of Mont Blanc, and grieved
To have a soulless image on the eye
That had usurped upon a living thought
That never more could be. The wondrous Vale
Of Chamouny stretched far below, and soon
With its dumb cataracts and streams of ice,
A motionless array of mighty waves,
Five rivers broad and vast, made rich amends,
And reconciled us to realities;
There small birds warble from the leafy trees,
The eagle soars high in the element,
There doth the reaper bind the yellow sheaf,
The maiden spread the haycock in the sun,
While Winter like a well-tamed lion walks,
Descending from the mountain to make sport
Among the cottages by beds of flowers.

Whate'er in this wide circuit we beheld,
Or heard, was fitted to our unripe state
Of intellect and heart. With such a book
Before our eyes, we could not choose but read
Lessons of genuine brotherhood, the plain
And universal reason of mankind,
The truths of young and old. Nor, side by side
Pacing, two social pilgrims, or alone
Each with his humour, could we fail to abound
In dreams and fictions, pensively composed:
Dejection taken up for pleasure's sake,
And gilded sympathies, the willow wreath,
And sober posies of funereal flowers,
Gathered among those solitudes sublime
From formal gardens of the lady Sorrow,
Did sweeten many a meditative hour.

Yet still in me with those soft luxuries
Mixed something of stern mood, an under-thirst
Of vigour seldom utterly allayed:
And from that source how different a sadness
Would issue, let one incident make known.
When from the Vallais we had turned, and clomb

Along the Simplon's steep and rugged road,
Following a band of muleteers, we reached
A halting-place, where all together took
Their noon-tide meal. Hastily rose our guide,
Leaving us at the board; awhile we lingered,
Then paced the beaten downward way that led
Right to a rough stream's edge, and there broke off;
The only track now visible was one
That from the torrent's further brink held forth
Conspicuous invitation to ascend
A lofty mountain. After brief delay
Crossing the unbridged stream, that road we took,
And clomb with eagerness, till anxious fears
Intruded, for we failed to overtake
Our comrades gone before. By fortunate chance,
While every moment added doubt to doubt,
A peasant met us, from whose mouth we learned
That to the spot which had perplexed us first
We must descend, and there should find the road,
Which in the stony channel of the stream
Lay a few steps, and then along its banks;
And, that our future course, all plain to sight,
Was downwards, with the current of that stream.
Loth to believe what we so grieved to hear,
For still we had hopes that pointed to the clouds,
We questioned him again, and yet again;
But every word that from the peasant's lips
Came in reply, translated by our feelings,
Ended in this,—*that we had crossed the Alps.*

Imagination—here the Power so called
Through sad incompetence of human speech,
That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss
Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
At once, some lonely traveller. I was lost;
Halted without an effort to break through;
But to my conscious soul I now can say—
"I recognise thy glory:" in such strength
Of usurpation, when the light of sense
Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
There harbours; whether we be young or old,
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be.
Under such banners militant, the soul
Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no spoils
That may attest her prowess, blest in thoughts
That are their own perfection and reward,
Strong in herself and in beatitude
That hides her, like the mighty flood of Nile
Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds
To fertilise the whole Egyptian plain.

The melancholy slackening that ensued
Upon those tidings by the peasant given
Was soon dislodged. Downwards we hurried fast,
And, with the half-shaped road which we had missed,
Entered a narrow chasm. [1] The brook and road
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy strait,
And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow pace. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent at every turn
Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,

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[1] See p. 112.

The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

That night our lodging was a house that stood
Alone within the valley, at a point
Where, tumbling from aloft, a torrent swelled
The rapid stream whose margin we had trod;
A dreary mansion, large beyond all need,
With high and spacious rooms, deafened and stunned
By noise of waters, making innocent sleep
Lie melancholy among weary bones.

Uprisen betimes, our journey we renewed,
Led by the stream, ere noon-day magnified
Into a lordly river, broad and deep,
Dimpling along in silent majesty,
With mountains for its neighbours, and in view
Of distant mountains and their snowy tops,
And thus proceeding to Locarno's Lake,
Fit resting-place for such a visitant.
Locarno! spreading out in width like Heaven,
How dost thou cleave to the poetic heart,
Bask in the sunshine of the memory;
And Como! thou, a treasure whom the earth
Keeps to herself, confined as in a depth
Of Abyssinian privacy. I spake
Of thee, thy chestnut woods, and garden plots
Of Indian corn tended by dark-eyed maids;
Thy lofty steeps, and pathways roofed with vines,
Winding from house to house, from town to town,
Sole link that binds them to each other; walks,
League after league, and cloistral avenues,
Where silence dwells if music be not there:
While yet a youth undisciplined in verse,
Through fond ambition of that hour I strove
To chant your praise; nor can approach you now
Ungreeted by a more melodious Song,
Where tones of Nature smoothed by learned Art
May flow in lasting current. Like a breeze
Or sunbeam over your domain I passed
In motion without pause; but ye have left
Your beauty with me, a serene accord
Of forms and colours, passive, yet endowed
In their submissiveness with power as sweet
And gracious, almost, might I dare to say,
As virtue is, or goodness; sweet as love,
Or the remembrance of a generous deed,
Or mildest visitations of pure thought,
When God, the giver of all joy, is thanked
Religiously, in silent blessedness;
Sweet as this last herself, for such it is.

With those delightful pathways we advanced,
For two days' space, in presence of the Lake,
That, stretching far among the Alps, assumed
A character more stern. The second night,
From sleep awakened, and misled by sound
Of the church clock telling the hours with strokes
Whose import then we had not learned, we rose
By moonlight, doubting not that day was nigh,
And that meanwhile, by no uncertain path,
Along the winding margin of the lake,
Led, as before, we should behold the scene
Hushed in profound repose. We left the town
Of Gravedona with this hope; but soon
Were lost, bewildered among woods immense,
And on a rock sate down, to wait for day.
An open place it was, and overlooked,
From high, the sullen water far beneath,
On which a dull red image of the moon
Lay bedded, changing oftentimes its form
Like an uneasy snake. From hour to hour
We sate and sate, wondering, as if the night

Had been ensnared by witchcraft. On the rock
At last we stretched our weary limbs for sleep,
But *could not* sleep, tormented by the stings
Of insects, which, with noise like that of noon,
Filled all the woods: the cry of unknown birds;
The mountains more by blackness visible
And their own size, than any outward light;
The breathless wilderness of clouds; the clock
That told, with unintelligible voice,
The widely parted hours; the noise of streams,
And sometimes rustling motions nigh at hand,
That did not leave us free from personal fear;
And, lastly, the withdrawing moon, that set
Before us, while she still was high in heaven;—
These were our food; and such a summer's night
Followed that pair of golden days that shed
On Como's Lake, and all that round it lay,
Their fairest, softest, happiest influence.

But here I must break off, and bid farewell
To days, each offering some new sight, or fraught
With some untried adventure, in a course
Prolonged till sprinklings of autumnal snow
Checked our unwearied steps. Let this alone
Be mentioned as a parting word, that not
In hollow exultation, dealing out
Hyperboles of praise comparative,
Not rich one moment to be poor for ever;
Not prostrate, overborne, as if the mind
Herself were nothing, a mere pensioner
On outward forms—did we in presence stand
Of that magnificent region. On the front
Of this whole Song is written that my heart
Must, in such Temple, needs have offered up
A different worship. Finally, whate'er
I saw, or heard, or felt, was but a stream
That flowed into a kindred stream; a gale,
Confederate with the current of the soul,
To speed my voyage; every sound or sight,
In its degree of power, administered
To grandeur or to tenderness,—to the one
Directly, but to tender thoughts by means
Less often instantaneous in effect;
Led me to these by paths that, in the main,
Were more circuitous, but not less sure
Duly to reach the point marked out by Heaven.

Oh, most belovèd Friend! a glorious time,
A happy time that was; triumphant looks
Were then the common language of all eyes;
As if awaked from sleep, the Nations hailed
Their great expectancy: the fife of war
Was then a spirit-stirring sound indeed,
A blackbird's whistle in a budding grove.
We left the Swiss exulting in the fate
Of their near neighbours; and, when shortening fast
Our pilgrimage, nor distant far from home,
We crossed the Brabant armies on the fret
For battle in the cause of Liberty.
A stripling, scarcely of the household then
Of social life, I looked upon these things
As from a distance; heard, and saw, and felt,
Was touched, but with no intimate concern;
I seemed to move along them, as a bird
Moves through the air, or as a fish pursues
Its sport, or feeds in its proper element;
I wanted not that joy, I did not need
Such help; the ever-living universe,
Turn where I might, was opening out its glories,
And the independent spirit of pure youth
Called forth, at every season, new delights,
Spread round my steps like sunshine o'er green fields.

Book Seventh

RESIDENCE IN LONDON

Six changeful years have vanished since I first
Poured out (saluted by that quickening breeze

Which met me issuing from the City's[1] walls)
A glad preamble to this Verse: I sang
Aloud, with fervour irresistible
Of short-lived transport, like a torrent bursting,
From a black thunder-cloud, down Scafell's side
To rush and disappear. But soon broke forth
(So willed the Muse) a less impetuous stream,
That flowed awhile with unabating strength,
Then stopped for years; not audible again
Before last primrose-time. Belovèd Friend!
The assurance which then cheered some heavy thoughts
On thy departure to a foreign land
Has failed; too slowly moves the promised work.
Through the whole summer have I been at rest,
Partly from voluntary holiday,
And part through outward hindrance. But I heard,
After the hour of sunset yester-even,
Sitting within doors between light and dark,
A choir of redbreasts gathered somewhere near
My threshold,—minstrels from the distant woods
Sent in on Winter's service, to announce,
With preparation artful and benign,
That the rough lord had left the surly North
On his accustomed journey. The delight,
Due to this timely notice, unawares
Smote me, and, listening, I in whispers said,
"Ye heartsome Choristers, ye and I will be
Associates, and, unscared by blustering winds,
Will chant together." Thereafter, as the shades
Of twilight deepened, going forth, I spied
A glow-worm underneath a dusky plume
Or canopy of yet unwithered fern,
Clear-shining, like a hermit's taper seen
Through a thick forest. Silence touched me here
No less than sound had done before; the child
Of Summer, lingering, shining, by herself,
The voiceless worm on the unfrequented hills,
Seemed sent on the same errand with the choir
Of Winter that had warbled at my door,
And the whole year breathed tenderness and love.

The last night's genial feeling overflowed
Upon this morning, and my favourite grove,
Tossing in sunshine its dark boughs aloft,
As if to make the strong wind visible,
Wakes in me agitations like its own,
A spirit friendly to the Poet's task,
Which we will now resume with lively hope,
Nor checked by aught of tamer argument
That lies before us, needful to be told.

Returned from that excursion,[2] soon I bade
Farewell for ever to the sheltered seats
Of gownèd students, quitted hall and bower,
And every comfort of that privileged ground,
Well pleased to pitch a vagrant tent among
The unfenced regions of society.

Yet, undetermined to what course of life
I should adhere, and seeming to possess
A little space of intermediate time
At full command, to London first I turned,
In no disturbance of excessive hope,
By personal ambition unenslaved,
Frugal as there was need, and, though self-willed,
From dangerous passions free. Three years had flown
Since I had felt in heart and soul the shock
Of the huge town's first presence, and had paced
Her endless streets, a transient visitant:
Now, fixed amid that concourse of mankind
Where Pleasure whirls about incessantly,
And life and labour seem but one, I filled
An idler's place; an idler well content
To have a house (what matter for a home?)
That owned him; living cheerfully abroad
With unchecked fancy ever on the stir,
And all my young affections out of doors.

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[1] The City of Goslar, in Lower Saxony.

[2] See p. 274.

There was a time when whatsoe'er is feigned
Of airy palaces, and gardens built
By Genii of romance; or hath in grave
Authentic history been set forth of Rome,
Alcairo, Babylon, or Persepolis;
Or given upon report by pilgrim friars,
Of golden cities ten months' journey deep
Among Tartarian wilds—fell short, far short,
Of what my fond simplicity believed
And thought of London—held me by a chain
Less strong of wonder and obscure delight.
Whether the bolt of childhood's Fancy shot
For me beyond its ordinary mark,
'Twere vain to ask; but in our flock of boys
Was One, a cripple from his birth, whom chance
Summoned from school to London; fortunate
And envied traveller! When the Boy returned,
After short absence, curiously I scanned
His mien and person, nor was free, in sooth,
From disappointment, not to find some change
In look and air, from that new region brought,
As if from Fairy-land. Much I questioned him;
And every word he uttered, on my ears
Fell flatter than a cagèd parrot's note,
That answers unexpectedly awry,
And mocks the prompter's listening. Marvellous things
Had vanity (quick Spirit that appears
Almost as deeply seated and as strong
In a Child's heart as fear itself) conceived
For my enjoyment. Would that I could now
Recall what then I pictured to myself,
Of mitred Prelates, Lords in ermine clad,
The King, and the King's Palace, and, not last,
Nor least, Heaven bless him! the renowned Lord Mayor.
Dreams not unlike to those which once begat
A change of purpose in young Whittington,
When he, a friendless and a drooping boy,
Sate on a stone, and heard the bells speak out
Articulate music. Above all, one thought
Baffled my understanding: how men lived
Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet still
Strangers, not knowing each the other's name.

Oh, wondrous power of words, by simple faith
Licensed to take the meaning that we love!
Vauxhall and Ranelagh! I then had heard
Of your green groves, and wilderness of lamps
Dimming the stars, and fireworks magical,
And gorgeous ladies, under splendid domes,
Floating in dance, or warbling high in air
The songs of spirits! Nor had Fancy fed
With less delight upon that other class
Of marvels, broad-day wonders permanent:
The River proudly bridged; the dizzy top
And Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's; the tombs
Of Westminster; the Giants of Guildhall;
Bedlam, and those carved maniacs at the gates,
Perpetually recumbent; Statues—man,
And the horse under him—in gilded pomp
Adorning flowery gardens, 'mid vast squares;
The Monument, and that Chamber of the Tower
Where England's sovereigns sit in long array,
Their steeds bestriding,—every mimic shape
Cased in the gleaming mail the monarch wore,
Whether for gorgeous tournament addressed,
Or life or death upon the battle-field.
Those bold imaginations in due time
Had vanished, leaving others in their stead:
And now I looked upon the living scene;
Familiarly perused it; oftentimes,
In spite of strongest disappointment, pleased
Through courteous self-submission, as a tax
Paid to the object by prescriptive right.

Rise up, thou monstrous ant-hill on the plain

Of a too busy world! Before me flow,
Thou endless stream of men and moving things!
Thy every-day appearance, as it strikes—
With wonder heightened, or sublimed by awe—
On strangers, of all ages; the quick dance
Of colours, lights, and forms; the deafening din;
The comers and the goers face to face,
Face after face; the string of dazzling wares,
Shop after shop, with symbols, blazoned names,
And all the tradesman's honours overhead:
Here, fronts of houses, like a title-page,
With letters huge inscribed from top to toe,
Stationed above the door, like guardian saints;
There, allegoric shapes, female or male,
Or physiognomies of real men,
Land-warriors, kings, or admirals of the sea,
Boyle, Shakspeare, Newton, or the attractive head
Of some quack-doctor, famous in his day.

Meanwhile the roar continues, till at length,
Escaped as from an enemy, we turn
Abruptly into some sequestered nook,
Still as a sheltered place when winds blow loud!
At leisure, thence, through tracts of thin resort,
And sights and sounds that come at intervals,
We take our way. A raree-show is here,
With children gathered round; another street
Presents a company of dancing dogs,
Or dromedary, with an antic pair
Of monkeys on his back; a minstrel band
Of Savoyards; or, single and alone,
An English ballad-singer. Private courts,
Gloomy as coffins, and unsightly lanes
Thrilled by some female vendor's scream, belike
The very shrillest of all London cries,
May then entangle our impatient steps;
Conducted through those labyrinths, unawares,
To privileged regions and inviolate,
Where from their airy lodges studious lawyers
Look out on waters, walks, and gardens green.

Thence back into the throng, until we reach,
Following the tide that slackens by degrees,
Some half-frequented scene, where wider streets
Bring straggling breezes of suburban air.
Here files of ballads dangle from dead walls;
Advertisements, of giant-size, from high
Press forward, in all colours, on the sight;
These, bold in conscious merit, lower down;
That, fronted with a most imposing word,
Is, peradventure, one in masquerade.
As on the broadening causeway we advance,
Behold, turned upwards, a face hard and strong
In lineaments, and red with over-toil.
'Tis one encountered here and everywhere;
A travelling cripple, by the trunk cut short,
And stumping on his arms. In sailor's garb
Another lies at length, beside a range
Of well-formed characters, with chalk inscribed
Upon the smooth flat stones: the Nurse is here,
The Bachelor, that loves to sun himself,
The military Idler, and the Dame,
That field-ward takes her walk with decent steps.

Now homeward through the thickening hubbub, where
See, among less distinguishable shapes,
The begging scavenger, with hat in hand;
The Italian, as he thrids his way with care,
Steadying, far-seen, a frame of images
Upon his head; with basket at his breast
The Jew; the stately and slow-moving Turk,
With freight of slippers piled beneath his arm!

Enough;—the mighty concourse I surveyed
With no unthinking mind, well pleased to note
Among the crowd all specimens of man,
Through all the colours which the sun bestows,

And every character of form and face:
The Swede, the Russian; from the genial south,
The Frenchman and the Spaniard; from remote
America, the Hunter-Indian; Moors,
Malays, Lascars, the Tartar, the Chinese,
And Negro Ladies in white muslin gowns.

At leisure, then, I viewed, from day to day,
The spectacles within doors,—birds and beasts
Of every nature, and strange plants convened
From every clime; and, next, those sights that ape
The absolute presence of reality,
Expressing, as in mirror, sea and land,
And what earth is, and what she has to show.
I do not here allude to subtlest craft,
By means refined attaining purest ends,
But imitations, fondly made in plain
Confession of man's weakness and his loves.
Whether the Painter, whose ambitious skill
Submits to nothing less than taking in
A whole horizon's circuit, do with power,
Like that of angels or commissioned spirits,
Fix us upon some lofty pinnacle,
Or in a ship on waters, with a world
Of life, and life-like mockery beneath,
Above, behind, far stretching and before;
Or more mechanic artist represent
By scale exact, in model, wood or clay,
From blended colours also borrowing help,
Some miniature of famous spots or things,—
St. Peter's Church; or, more aspiring aim,
In microscopic vision, Rome herself;
Or, haply, some choice rural haunt,—the Falls
Of Tivoli; and, high upon that steep,
The Sibyl's mouldering Temple! every tree,
Villa, or cottage, lurking among rocks
Throughout the landscape; tuft, stone scratch minute—
All that the traveller sees when he is there.

Add to these exhibitions, mute and still,
Others of wider scope, where living men,
Music, and shifting pantomimic scenes,
Diversified the allurement. Need I fear
To mention by its name, as in degree,
Lowest of these and humblest in attempt,
Yet richly graced with honours of her own,
Half-rural Sadler's Wells? Though at that time
Intolerant, as is the way of youth
Unless itself be pleased, here more than once
Taking my seat, I saw (nor blush to add,
With ample recompense) giants and dwarfs,
Clowns, conjurors, posture-masters, harlequins,
Amid the uproar of the rabblement,
Perform their feats. Nor was it mean delight
To watch crude Nature work in untaught minds;
To note the laws and progress of belief;
Though obstinate on this way, yet on that
How willingly we travel, and how far!
To have, for instance, brought upon the scene
The champion, Jack the Giant-killer: Lo!
He dons his coat of darkness; on the stage
Walks, and achieves his wonders, from the eye
Of living Mortal covert, "as the moon
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave."
Delusion bold! and how can it be wrought?
The garb he wears is black as death, the word
"*Invisible*" flames forth upon his chest.

Here, too, were "forms and pressures of the time,"
Rough, bold, as Grecian comedy displayed
When Art was young; dramas of living men,
And recent things yet warm with life; a sea-fight,
Shipwreck, or some domestic incident
Divulged by Truth and magnified by Fame;
Such as the daring brotherhood of late
Set forth, too serious theme for that light place—
I mean, O distant Friend! a story drawn
From our own ground,—the Maid of Buttermere,—
And how, unfaithful to a virtuous wife
Deserted and deceived, the Spoiler came
And wooed the artless daughter of the hills,
And wedded her, in cruel mockery
Of love and marriage bonds. These words to thee
Must needs bring back the moment when we first,

Ere the broad world rang with the maiden's name,
Beheld her serving at the cottage inn;
Both stricken, as she entered or withdrew,
With admiration of her modest mien
And carriage, marked by unexampled grace.
We since that time not unfamiliarly
Have seen her,—her discretion have observed,
Her just opinions, delicate reserve,
Her patience, and humility of mind
Unspoiled by commendation and the excess
Of public notice—an offensive light
To a meek spirit suffering inwardly.

From this memorial tribute to my theme
I was returning, when, with sundry forms
Commingled—shapes which met me in the way
That we must tread—thy image rose again,
Maiden of Buttermere! She lives in peace
Upon the spot where she was born and reared;
Without contamination doth she live
In quietness, without anxiety:
Beside the mountain chapel, sleeps in earth
Her new-born infant, fearless as a lamb
That, thither driven from some unsheltered place,
Rests underneath the little rock-like pile
When storms are raging. Happy are they both—
Mother and child!—These feelings, in themselves
Trite, do yet scarcely seem so when I think
On those ingenuous moments of our youth
Ere we have learnt by use to slight the crimes
And sorrows of the world. Those simple days
Are now my theme; and, foremost of the scenes,
Which yet survive in memory, appears
One, at whose centre sate a lovely Boy,
A sportive infant, who, for six months' space,
Not more, had been of age to deal about
Articulate prattle—Child as beautiful
As ever clung around a mother's neck,
Or father fondly gazed upon with pride.
There, too, conspicuous for stature tall
And large dark eyes, beside her infant stood
The mother; but, upon her cheeks diffused,
False tints too well accorded with the glare
From play-house lustres thrown without reserve
On every object near. The Boy had been
The pride and pleasure of all lookers-on
In whatsoever place, but seemed in this
A sort of alien scattered from the clouds.
Of lusty vigour, more than infantine
He was in limb, in cheek a summer rose
Just three parts blown—a cottage-child—if e'er,
By cottage-door on breezy mountain-side,
Or in some sheltering vale, was seen a babe
By Nature's gifts so favoured. Upon a board
Decked with refreshments had this child been placed
His little stage in the vast theatre,
And there he sate, surrounded with a throng
Of chance spectators, chiefly dissolute men
And shameless women, treated and caressed;
Ate, drank, and with the fruit and glasses played,
While oaths and laughter and indecent speech
Were rife about him as the songs of birds
Contending after showers. The mother now
Is fading out of memory, but I see
The lovely Boy as I beheld him then
Among the wretched and the falsely gay,
Like one of those who walked with hair unsinged
Amid the fiery furnace. Charms and spells
Muttered on black and spiteful instigation
Have stopped, as some believe, the kindliest growths.
Ah, with how different spirit might a prayer
Have been preferred, that this fair creature, checked
By special privilege of Nature's love,
Should in his childhood be detained for ever!
But with its universal freight the tide
Hath rolled along, and this bright innocent,
Mary! may now have lived till he could look
With envy on thy nameless babe that sleeps,
Beside the mountain chapel, undisturbed.

Four rapid years had scarcely then been told
Since, travelling southward from our pastoral hills,

I heard, and for the first time in my life,
The voice of woman utter blasphemy—
Saw woman as she is, to open shame
Abandoned, and the pride of public vice;
I shuddered, for a barrier seemed at once
Thrown in that from humanity divorced
Humanity, splitting the race of man
In twain, yet leaving the same outward form.
Distress of mind ensued upon the sight,
And ardent meditation. Later years
Brought to such spectacle a milder sadness,
Feelings of pure commiseration, grief
For the individual and the overthrow
Of her soul's beauty; farther I was then
But seldom led, or wished to go; in truth
The sorrow of the passion stopped me there.

But let me now, less moved, in order take
Our argument. Enough is said to show
How casual incidents of real life,
Observed where pastime only had been sought,
Outweighed, or put to flight, the set events
And measured passions of the stage, albeit
By Siddons trod in the fulness of her power.
Yet was the theatre my dear delight;
The very gilding, lamps and painted scrolls,
And all the mean upholstery of the place,
Wanted not animation, when the tide
Of pleasure ebbed but to return as fast
With the ever-shifting figures of the scene,
Solemn or gay: whether some beauteous dame
Advanced in radiance through a deep recess
Of thick entangled forest, like the moon
Opening the clouds; or sovereign king, announced
With flourishing trumpet, came in full-blown state
Of the world's greatness, winding round with train
Of courtiers, banners, and a length of guards;
Or captive led in abject weeds, and jingling
His slender manacles; or romping girl
Bounced, leapt, and pawed the air; or mumbling sire,
A scare-crow pattern of old age dressed up
In all the tatters of infirmity
All loosely put together, hobbled in,
Stumping upon a cane with which he smites,
From time to time, the solid boards, and makes them
Prate somewhat loudly of the whereabout
Of one so overloaded with his years.
But what of this! the laugh, the grin, grimace,
The antics striving to outstrip each other,
Were all received, the least of them not lost,
With an unmeasured welcome. Through the night,
Between the show, and many-headed mass
Of the spectators, and each several nook
Filled with its fray or brawl, how eagerly
And with what flashes, as it were, the mind
Turned this way—that way! sportive and alert
And watchful, as a kitten when at play,
While winds are eddying round her, among straws
And rustling leaves. Enchanting age and sweet!
Romantic almost, looked at through a space,
How small, of intervening years! For then,
Though surely no mean progress had been made
In meditations holy and sublime,
Yet something of a girlish child-like gloss
Of novelty survived for scenes like these;
Enjoyment haply handed down from times
When at a country-playhouse, some rude barn
Tricked out for that proud use, if I perchance
Caught, on a summer evening through a chink
In the old wall, an unexpected glimpse
Of daylight, the bare thought of where I was
Gladdened me more than if I had been led
Into a dazzling cavern of romance,
Crowded with Genii busy among works
Not to be looked at by the common sun.

The matter that detains us now may seem,
To many, neither dignified enough
Nor arduous, yet will not be scorned by them,
Who, looking inward, have observed the ties
That bind the perishable hours of life
Each to the other, and the curious props
By which the world of memory and thought
Exists and is sustained. More lofty themes,
Such as at least do wear a prouder face,
Solicit our regard; but when I think
Of these, I feel the imaginative power
Languish within me; even then it slept,

When, pressed by tragic sufferings, the heart
Was more than full; amid my sobs and tears
It slept, even in the pregnant season of youth.
For though I was most passionately moved
And yielded to all changes of the scene
With an obsequious promptness, yet the storm
Passed not beyond the suburbs of the mind;
Save when realities of act and mien,
The incarnation of the spirits that move
In harmony amid the Poet's world,
Rose to ideal grandeur, or, called forth
By power of contrast, made me recognise,
As at a glance, the things which I had shaped,
And yet not shaped, had seen and scarcely seen,
When, having closed the mighty Shakspeare's page,
I mused, and thought, and felt, in solitude.

Pass we from entertainments, that are such
Professedly, to others titled higher,
Yet, in the estimate of youth at least,
More near akin to those than names imply,—
I mean the brawls of lawyers in their courts
Before the ermined judge, or that great stage
Where senators, tongue-favoured men, perform,
Admired and envied. Oh! the beating heart,
When one among the prime of these rose up,—
One, of whose name from childhood we had heard
Familiarly, a household term, like those,
The Bedfords, Glosters, Salsburys, of old,
Whom the fifth Harry talks of. Silence! hush!
This is no trifler, no short-flighted wit,
No stammerer of a minute, painfully
Delivered. No! the Orator hath yoked
The Hours, like young Aurora, to his car:
Thrice welcome Presence! how can patience e'er
Grow weary of attending on a track
That kindles with such glory! All are charmed,
Astonished; like a hero in romance,
He winds away his never-ending horn;
Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense:
What memory and what logic! till the strain
Transcendent, superhuman as it seemed,
Grows tedious even in a young man's ear.

Genius of Burke! forgive the pen seduced
By specious wonders, and too slow to tell
Of what the ingenuous, what bewildered men,
Beginning to mistrust their boastful guides,
And wise men, willing to grow wiser, caught,
Rapt auditors! from thy most eloquent tongue—
Now mute, for ever mute in the cold grave.
I see him,—old, but vigorous in age,—
Stand like an oak whose stag-horn branches start
Out of its leafy brow, the more to awe
The younger brethren of the grove. But some—
While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,
Against all systems built on abstract rights,
Keen ridicule; the majesty proclaims
Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time;
Declares the vital power of social ties
Endeared by Custom; and with high disdain,
Exploding upstart Theory, insists
Upon the allegiance to which men are born—
Some—say at once a froward multitude—
Murmur (for truth is hated, where not loved)
As the winds fret within the Æolian cave,
Galled by their monarch's chain. The times were big
With ominous change, which, night by night, provoked
Keen struggles, and black clouds of passion raised;
But memorable moments intervened,
When Wisdom, like the Goddess from Jove's brain,
Broke forth in armour of resplendent words,
Startling the Synod. Could a youth, and one
In ancient story versed, whose breast had heaved
Under the weight of classic eloquence,
Sit, see, and hear, unthankful, uninspired?

Nor did the Pulpit's oratory fail

To achieve its higher triumph. Not unfelt
Were its admonishments, nor lightly heard
The awful truths delivered thence by tongues
Endowed with various power to search the soul;
Yet ostentation, domineering, oft
Poured forth harangues, how sadly out of place!—
There have I seen a comely bachelor,
Fresh from a toilette of two hours, ascend
His rostrum, with seraphic glance look up,
And, in a tone elaborately low
Beginning, lead his voice through many a maze
A minuet course; and, winding up his mouth,
From time to time, into an orifice
Most delicate, a lurking eyelet, small,
And only not invisible, again
Open it out, diffusing thence a smile
Of rapt irradiation, exquisite.
Meanwhile the Evangelists, Isaiah, Job,
Moses, and he who penned, the other day,
The Death of Abel, Shakspeare, and the Bard
Whose genius spangled o'er a gloomy theme
With fancies thick as his inspiring stars,
And Ossian (doubt not—'tis the naked truth)
Summoned from streamy Morven—each and all
Would, in their turns, lend ornaments and flowers
To entwine the crook of eloquence that helped
This pretty Shepherd, pride of all the plains,
To rule and guide his captivated flock.

I glance but at a few conspicuous marks,
Leaving a thousand others, that, in hall,
Court, theatre, conventicle, or shop,
In public room or private, park or street,
Each fondly reared on his own pedestal,
Looked out for admiration. Folly, vice,
Extravagance in gesture, mien, and dress,
And all the strife of singularity,
Lies to the ear, and lies to every sense—
Of these, and of the living shapes they wear,
There is no end. Such candidates for regard,
Although well pleased to be where they were found,
I did not hunt after, nor greatly prize,
Nor made unto myself a secret boast
Of reading them with quick and curious eye;
But, as a common produce, things that are
To-day, to-morrow will be, took of them
Such willing note, as, on some errand bound
That asks not speed, a traveller might bestow
On sea-shells that bestrew the sandy beach,
Or daisies swarming through the fields of June.

But foolishness and madness in parade,
Though most at home in this their dear domain,
Are scattered everywhere, no rarities,
Even to the rudest novice of the Schools.
Me, rather, it employed, to note, and keep
In memory, those individual sights
Of courage, or integrity, or truth,
Or tenderness, which there, set off by foil,
Appeared more touching. One will I select—
A Father—for he bore that sacred name;—
Him saw I, sitting in an open square,
Upon a corner-stone of that low wall,
Wherein were fixed the iron pales that fenced
A spacious grass-plot; there, in silence, sate
This One Man, with a sickly babe outstretched
Upon his knee, whom he had thither brought
For sunshine, and to breathe the fresher air.
Of those who passed, and me who looked at him,
He took no heed; but in his brawny arms
(The Artificer was to the elbow bare,
And from his work this moment had been stolen)
He held the child, and, bending over it,
As if he were afraid both of the sun
And of the air, which he had come to seek,
Eyed the poor babe with love unutterable.

As the black storm upon the mountain top
Sets off the sunbeam in the valley, so
That huge fermenting mass of human-kind
Serves as a solemn back-ground, or relief,
To single forms and objects, whence they draw,

For feeling and contemplative regard,
More than inherent liveliness and power.
How oft, amid those overflowing streets,
Have I gone forward with the crowd, and said
Unto myself, "The face of every one
That passes by me is a mystery!"
Thus have I looked, nor ceased to look, oppressed
By thoughts of what and whither, when and how,
Until the shapes before my eyes became
A second-sight procession, such as glides
Over still mountains, or appears in dreams;
And once, far-travelled in such mood, beyond
The reach of common indication, lost
Amid the moving pageant, I was smitten
Abruptly, with the view (a sight not rare)
Of a blind Beggar, who, with upright face,
Stood, propped against a wall, upon his chest
Wearing a written paper, to explain
His story, whence he came, and who he was.
Caught by the spectacle my mind turned round
As with the might of waters; and apt type
This label seemed of the utmost we can know,
Both of ourselves and of the universe;
And, on the shape of that unmoving man,
His steadfast face and sightless eyes, I gazed,
As if admonished from another world.

Though reared upon the base of outward things,
Structures like these the excited spirit mainly
Builds for herself; scenes different there are,
Full-formed, that take, with small internal help,
Possession of the faculties,—the peace
That comes with night; the deep solemnity
Of nature's intermediate hours of rest,
When the great tide of human life stands still:
The business of the day to come, unborn,
Of that gone by, locked up, as in the grave;
The blended calmness of the heavens and earth,
Moonlight and stars, and empty streets, and sounds
Unfrequent as in deserts; at late hours
Of winter evenings, when unwholesome rains
Are falling hard, with people yet astir,
The feeble salutation from the voice
Of some unhappy woman, now and then
Heard as we pass, when no one looks about,
Nothing is listened to. But these, I fear,
Are falsely catalogued; things that are, are not,
As the mind answers to them, or the heart
Is prompt, or slow, to feel. What say you, then,
To times, when half the city shall break out
Full of one passion, vengeance, rage, or fear?
To executions, to a street on fire,
Mobs, riots, or rejoicings? From these sights
Take one,—that ancient festival, the Fair,
Holden where martyrs suffered in past time,
And named of St. Bartholomew; there, see
A work completed to our hands, that lays,
If any spectacle on earth can do,
The whole creative powers of man asleep!—
For once, the Muse's help will we implore,
And she shall lodge us, wafted on her wings,
Above the press and danger of the crowd,
Upon some showman's platform. What a shock
For eyes and ears! what anarchy and din,
Barbarian and infernal,—a phantasma,
Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound!
Below, the open space, through every nook
Of the wide area, twinkles, is alive
With heads; the midway region, and above,
Is thronged with staring pictures and huge scrolls,
Dumb proclamations of the Prodigies;
With chattering monkeys dangling from their poles,
And children whirling in their roundabouts;
With those that stretch the neck and strain the eyes,
And crack the voice in rivalship, the crowd
Inviting; with buffoons against buffoons
Grimacing, writhing, screaming,—him who grinds

The hurdy-gurdy, at the fiddle weaves,
Rattles the salt-box, thumps the kettle-drum,
And him who at the trumpet puffs his cheeks,
The silver-collared Negro with his timbrel,
Equestrians, tumblers, women, girls, and boys,
Blue-breeched, pink-vested, with high-towering plumes.—
All moveables of wonder, from all parts,
Are here—Albinos, painted Indians, Dwarfs,
The Horse of knowledge, and the learned Pig,
The Stone-eater, the man that swallows fire,
Giants, Ventriloquists, the Invisible Girl,
The Bust that speaks and moves its goggling eyes,
The Wax-work, Clock-work, all the marvellous craft
Of modern Merlins, Wild Beasts, Puppet-shows,
All out-o'-the-way, far-fetched, perverted things,
All freaks of nature, all Promethean thoughts
Of man, his dulness, madness, and their feats
All jumbled up together, to compose
A Parliament of Monsters. Tents and Booths
Meanwhile, as if the whole were one vast mill,
Are vomiting, receiving on all sides,
Men, Women, three-years' Children, Babes in arms.

Oh, blank confusion! true epitome
Of what the mighty City is herself,
To thousands upon thousands of her sons,
Living amid the same perpetual whirl
Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
To one identity, by differences
That have no law, no meaning, and no end—
Oppression, under which even highest minds
Must labour, whence the strongest are not free.
But though the picture weary out the eye,
By nature an unmanageable sight,
It is not wholly so to him who looks
In steadiness, who hath among least things
An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts
As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.
This, of all acquisitions, first awaits
On sundry and most widely different modes
Of education, nor with least delight
On that through which I passed. Attention springs,
And comprehensiveness and memory flow,
From early converse with the works of God
Among all regions; chiefly where appear
Most obviously simplicity and power.
Think, how the everlasting streams and woods,
Stretched and still stretching far and wide, exalt
The roving Indian, on his desert sands:
What grandeur not unfelt, what pregnant show
Of beauty, meets the sun-burnt Arab's eye:
And, as the sea propels, from zone to zone,
Its currents; magnifies its shoals of life
Beyond all compass; spreads, and sends aloft
Armies of clouds,—even so, its powers and aspects
Shape for mankind, by principles as fixed,
The views and aspirations of the soul
To majesty. Like virtue have the forms
Perennial of the ancient hills; nor less
The changeful language of their countenances
Quickens the slumbering mind, and aids the thoughts,
However multitudinous, to move
With order and relation. This, if still,
As hitherto, in freedom I may speak,
Not violating any just restraint,
As may be hoped, of real modesty,—
This did I feel, in London's vast domain.
The Spirit of Nature was upon me there;
The soul of Beauty and enduring Life
Vouchsafed her inspiration, and diffused,
Through meagre lines and colours, and the press
Of self-destroying, transitory things,
Composure, and ennobling Harmony.

BOOK EIGHTH

RETROSPECT—LOVE OF NATURE LEADING TO LOVE OF MAN

WHAT sounds are those, Helvellyn, that are heard

Up to thy summit, through the depth of air
Ascending, as if distance had the power
To make the sounds more audible? What crowd
Covers, or sprinkles o'er, yon village green?
Crowd seems it, solitary hill! to thee,
Though but a little family of men,
Shepherds and tillers of the ground—betimes
Assembled with their children and their wives,
And here and there a stranger interspersed.
They hold a rustic fair—a festival,
Such as, on this side now, and now on that,
Repeated through his tributary vales,
Helvellyn, in the silence of his rest,
Sees annually, if clouds towards either ocean
Blown from their favourite resting-place, or mists
Dissolved, have left him an unshrouded head.
Delightful day it is for all who dwell
In this secluded glen, and eagerly
They give it welcome. Long ere heat of noon,
From byre or field the kine were brought; the sheep
Are penned in cotes; the chaffering is begun.
The heifer lows, uneasy at the voice
Of a new master; bleat the flocks aloud.
Booths are there none; a stall or two is here;
A lame man or a blind, the one to beg,
The other to make music; hither, too,
From far, with basket, slung upon her arm,
Of hawker's wares—books, pictures, combs, and pins—
Some aged woman finds her way again,
Year after year, a punctual visitant!
There also stands a speech-maker by rote,
Pulling the strings of his boxed raree-show;
And in the lapse of many years may come
Prouder itinerant, mountebank, or he
Whose wonders in a covered wain lie hid.
But one there is, the loveliest of them all,
Some sweet lass of the valley, looking out
For gains, and who that sees her would not buy?
Fruits of her father's orchard are her wares,
And with the ruddy produce she walks round
Among the crowd, half pleased with, half ashamed
Of, her new office, blushing restlessly.
The children now are rich, for the old to-day
Are generous as the young; and, if content
With looking on, some ancient wedded pair
Sit in the shade together; while they gaze,
"A cheerful smile unbends the wrinkled brow,
The days departed start again to life,
And all the scenes of childhood reappear,
Faint, but more tranquil, like the changing sun
To him who slept at noon and wakes at eve."[1]
Thus gaiety and cheerfulness prevail,
Spreading from young to old, from old to young,
And no one seems to want his share.—Immense
Is the recess, the circumambient world
Magnificent, by which they are embraced:
They move about upon the soft green turf:
How little they, they and their doings, seem,
And all that they can further or obstruct!
Through utter weakness pitiably dear,
As tender infants are: and yet how great!
For all things serve them: them the morning light
Loves, as it glistens on the silent rocks;
And them the silent rocks, which now from high
Look down upon them; the reposing clouds;
The wild brooks prattling from invisible haunts;
And old Helvellyn, conscious of the stir
Which animates this day their calm abode.

With deep devotion, Nature, did I feel,
In that enormous City's turbulent world
Of men and things, what benefit I owed
To thee, and those domains of rural peace,
Where to the sense of beauty first my heart
Was opened; tract more exquisitely fair
Than that famed paradise of ten thousand trees,
Or Gehol's matchless gardens, for delight
Of the Tartarian dynasty composed
(Beyond that mighty wall, not fabulous,

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[1] These lines are from a descriptive Poem—"Malvern Hills"—by one of Mr. Wordsworth's oldest friends, Mr. Joseph Cottle.

China's stupendous mound) by patient toil
Of myriads and boon nature's lavish help;
There, in a clime from widest empire chosen,
Fulfilling (could enchantment have done more?)
A sumptuous dream of flowery lawns, with domes
Of pleasure sprinkled over, shady dells
For eastern monasteries, sunny mounts
With temples crested, bridges, gondolas,
Rocks, dens, and groves of foliage taught to melt
Into each other their obsequious hues,
Vanished and vanishing in subtle chase,
Too fine to be pursued; or standing forth
In no discordant opposition, strong
And gorgeous as the colours side by side
Bedded among rich plumes of tropic birds;
And mountains over all, embracing all;
And all the landscape, endlessly enriched
With waters running, falling, or asleep.

But lovelier far than this, the paradise
Where I was reared; in Nature's primitive gifts
Favoured no less, and more to every sense
Delicious, seeing that the sun and sky,
The elements, and seasons as they change,
Do find a worthy fellow-labourer there—
Man free, man working for himself, with choice
Of time, and place, and object; by his wants,
His comforts, native occupations, cares,
Cheerfully led to individual ends
Or social, and still followed by a train
Unwooed, unthought-of even—simplicity,
And beauty, and inevitable grace.

Yea, when a glimpse of those imperial bowers
Would to a child be transport over-great,
When but a half-hour's roam through such a place
Would leave behind a dance of images,
That shall break in upon his sleep for weeks;
Even then the common haunts of the green earth,
And ordinary interests of man,
Which they embosom, all without regard
As both may seem, are fastening on the heart
Insensibly, each with the other's help.
For me, when my affections first were led
From kindred, friends, and playmates, to partake
Love for the human creature's absolute self,
That noticeable kindliness of heart
Sprang out of fountains, there abounding most,
Where sovereign Nature dictated the tasks
And occupations which her beauty adorned,
And Shepherds were the men that pleased me first;
Not such as Saturn ruled 'mid Latian wilds,
With arts and laws so tempered, that their lives
Left, even to us toiling in this late day,
A bright tradition of the golden age;
Not such as, 'mid Arcadian fastnesses
Sequestered, handed down among themselves
Felicity, in Grecian song renowned;
Nor such as—when an adverse fate had driven,
From house and home, the courtly band whose fortunes
Entered, with Shakspeare's genius, the wild woods
Of Arden—amid sunshine or in shade
Culled the best fruits of Time's uncounted hours,
Ere Phœbe sighed for the false Ganymede;
Or there where Perdita and Florizel
Together danced, Queen of the feast, and King;
Nor such as Spenser fabled. True it is,
That I had heard (what he perhaps had seen)
Of maids at sunrise bringing in from far
Their May-bush, and along the streets in flocks
Parading with a song of taunting rhymes,
Aimed at the laggards slumbering within doors;
Had also heard, from those who yet remembered,
Tales of the May-pole dance, and wreaths that decked
Porch, door-way, or kirk-pillar; and of youths,
Each with his maid, before the sun was up,
By annual custom, issuing forth in troops,
To drink the waters of some sainted well,
And hang it round with garlands. Love survives;
But, for such purpose, flowers no longer grow:

The times, too sage, perhaps too proud, have dropped
These lighter graces; and the rural ways
And manners which my childhood looked upon
Were the unluxuriant produce of a life
Intent on little but substantial needs,
Yet rich in beauty, beauty that was felt.
But images of danger and distress,
Man suffering among awful Powers and Forms;
Of this I heard, and saw enough to make
Imagination restless; nor was free
Myself from frequent perils; nor were tales
Wanting,—the tragedies of former times,
Hazards and strange escapes, of which the rocks
Immutable, and everflowing streams,
Where'er I roamed, were speaking monuments.

Smooth life had flock and shepherd in old time,
Long springs and tepid winters, on the banks
Of delicate Galesus; and no less
Those scattered along Adria's myrtle shores:
Smooth life had herdsman, and his snow-white herd
To triumphs and to sacrificial rites
Devoted, on the inviolable stream
Of rich Clitumnus; and the goat-herd lived
As calmly, underneath the pleasant brows
Of cool Lucretilis, where the pipe was heard
Of Pan, Invisible God, thrilling the rocks
With tutelary music, from all harm
The fold protecting. I myself, mature
In manhood then, have seen a pastoral tract
Like one of these, where Fancy might run wild,
Though under skies less generous, less serene:
There, for her own delight had Nature framed
A pleasure-ground, diffused a fair expanse
Of level pasture, islanded with groves
And banked with woody risings; but the Plain
Endless, here opening widely out, and there
Shut up in lesser lakes or beds of lawn
And intricate recesses, creek or bay
Sheltered within a shelter, where at large
The shepherd strays, a rolling hut his home.
Thither he comes with spring-time, there abides
All summer, and at sunrise ye may hear
His flageolet to liquid notes of love
Attuned, or sprightly fife resounding far.
Nook is there none, nor tract of that vast space
Where passage opens, but the same shall have
In turn its visitant, telling there his hours
In unlaborious pleasure, with no task
More toilsome than to carve a beechen bowl
For spring or fountain, which the traveller finds,
When through the region he pursues at will
His devious course. A glimpse of such sweet life
I saw when, from the melancholy walls
Of Goslar, once imperial, I renewed
My daily walk along that wide champaign,
That, reaching to her gates, spreads east and west,
And northwards, from beneath the mountainous verge
Of the Hercynian forest. Yet, hail to you
Moors, mountains, headlands, and ye hollow vales,
Ye long deep channels for the Atlantic's voice,
Powers of my native region! Ye that seize
The heart with firmer grasp! Your snows and streams
Ungovernable, and your terrifying winds,
That howl so dismally for him who treads
Companionless your awful solitudes!
There, 'tis the shepherd's task the winter long
To wait upon the storms: of their approach
Sagacious, into sheltering coves he drives
His flock, and thither from the homestead bears
A toilsome burden up the craggy ways,
And deals it out, their regular nourishment
Strewn on the frozen snow. And when the spring
Looks out, and all the pastures dance with lambs,
And when the flock, with warmer weather, climbs
Higher and higher, him his office leads
To watch their goings, whatsoever track
The wanderers choose. For this he quits his home
At day-spring, and no sooner doth the sun

Begin to strike him with a fire-like heat,
Than he lies down upon some shining rock,
And breakfasts with his dog. When they have stolen,
As is their wont, a pittance from strict time,
For rest not needed or exchange of love,
Then from his couch he starts; and now his feet
Crush out a livelier fragrance from the flowers
Of lowly thyme, by Nature's skill enwrought
In the wild turf: the lingering dews of morn
Smoke round him, as from hill to hill he hies,
His staff protending like a hunter's spear,
Or by its aid leaping from crag to crag,
And o'er the brawling beds of unbridged streams.
Philosophy, methinks, at Fancy's call,
Might deign to follow him through what he does
Or sees in his day's march; himself he feels,
In those vast regions where his service lies,
A freeman, wedded to his life of hope
And hazard, and hard labour interchanged
With that majestic indolence so dear
To native man. A rambling schoolboy, thus,
I felt his presence in his own domain,
As of a lord and master, or a power,
Or genius, under Nature, under God,
Presiding; and severest solitude
Had more commanding looks when he was there.
When up the lonely brooks on rainy days
Angling I went, or trod the trackless hills
By mists bewildered, suddenly mine eyes
Have glanced upon him distant a few steps,
In size a giant, stalking through thick fog,
His sheep like Greenland bears; or, as he stepped
Beyond the boundary line of some hill-shadow,
His form hath flashed upon me, glorified
By the deep radiance of the setting sun:
Or him have I descried in distant sky,
A solitary object and sublime,
Above all height! like an aerial cross
Stationed alone upon a spiry rock
Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was man
Ennobled outwardly before my sight,
And thus my heart was early introduced
To an unconscious love and reverence
Of human nature; hence the human form
To me became an index of delight,
Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.
Meanwhile this creature—spiritual almost
As those of books, but more exalted far;
Far more of an imaginative form
Than the gay Corin of the groves, who lives
For his own fancies, or to dance by the hour,
In coronal, with Phyllis in the midst—
Was, for the purposes of kind, a man
With the most common; husband, father; learned,
Could teach, admonish; suffered with the rest
From vice and folly, wretchedness and fear;
Of this I little saw, cared less for it,
But something must have felt.
Call ye these appearances—
Which I beheld of shepherds in my youth,
This sanctity of Nature given to man—
A shadow, a delusion, ye who pore
On the dead letter, miss the spirit of things;
Whose truth is not a motion or a shape
Instinct with vital functions, but a block
Or waxen image which yourselves have made
And ye adore! But blessèd be the God
Of Nature and of Man that this was so;
That men before my inexperienced eyes
Did first present themselves thus purified,
Removed, and to a distance that was fit:
And so we all of us in some degree
Are led to knowledge, wheresoever led,
And howsoever; were it otherwise,
And we found evil fast as we find good
In our first years, or think that it is found,
How could the innocent heart bear up and live!
But doubly fortunate my lot; not here
Alone, that something of a better life
Perhaps was round me than it is the privilege
Of most to move in, but that first I looked
At Man through objects that were great or fair;
First communed with him by their help. And thus
Was founded a sure safeguard and defence
Against the weight of meanness, selfish cares,
Coarse manners, vulgar passions, that beat in
On all sides from the ordinary world
In which we traffic. Starting from this point

I had my face turned toward the truth, began
With an advantage furnished by that kind
Of prepossession, without which the soul
Receives no knowledge that can bring forth good,
No genuine insight ever comes to her.
From the restraint of over-watchful eyes
Preserved, I moved about, year after year,
Happy, and now most thankful that my walk
Was guarded from too early intercourse
With the deformities of crowded life,
And those ensuing laughters and contempts,
Self-pleasing, which, if we would wish to think
With a due reverence on earth's rightful lord,
Here placed to be the inheritor of heaven,
Will not permit us; but pursue the mind,
That to devotion willingly would rise,
Into the temple and the temple's heart.

Yet deem not, Friend! that human kind with me
Thus early took a place pre-eminent;
Nature herself was, at this unripe time,
But secondary to my own pursuits
And animal activities, and all
Their trivial pleasures; and when these had drooped
And gradually expired, and Nature, prized
For her own sake, became my joy, even then—
And upwards through late youth, until not less
Than two-and-twenty summers had been told—
Was Man in my affections and regards
Subordinate to her, her visible forms
And viewless agencies: a passion, she,
A rapture often, and immediate love
Ever at hand; he, only a delight
Occasional, an accidental grace,
His hour being not yet come. Far less had then
The inferior creatures, beast or bird, attuned
My spirit to that gentleness of love,
(Though they had long been carefully observed),
Won from me those minute obeisances
Of tenderness, which I may number now
With my first blessings. Nevertheless, on these
The light of beauty did not fall in vain,
Or grandeur circumfuse them to no end.

But when that first poetic faculty
Of plain Imagination and severe,
No longer a mute influence of the soul,
Ventured, at some rash Muse's earnest call,
To try her strength among harmonious words;
And to book-notions and the rules of art
Did knowingly conform itself; there came
Among the simple shapes of human life
A wilfulness of fancy and conceit;
And Nature and her objects beautified
These fictions, as in some sort, in their turn,
They burnished her. From touch of this new power
Nothing was safe: the elder-tree that grew
Beside the well-known charnel-house had then
A dismal look: the yew-tree had its ghost,
That took his station there for ornament:
The dignities of plain occurrence then
Were tasteless, and truth's golden mean, a point
Where no sufficient pleasure could be found.
Then, if a widow, staggering with the blow
Of her distress, was known to have turned her steps
To the cold grave in which her husband slept,
One night, or haply more than one, through pain
Or half-insensate impotence of mind,
The fact was caught at greedily, and there
She must be visitant the whole year through,
Wetting the turf with never-ending tears.

Through quaint obliquities I might pursue
These cravings; when the foxglove, one by one,
Upwards through every stage of the tall stem,
Had shed beside the public way its bells,
And stood of all dismantled, save the last
Left at the tapering ladder's top, that seemed
To bend as doth a slender blade of grass
Tipped with a rain-drop, Fancy loved to seat,
Beneath the plant despoiled, but crested still
With this last relic, soon itself to fall,
Some vagrant mother, whose arch little ones,

All unconcerned by her dejected plight,
Laughed as with rival eagerness their hands
Gathered the purple cups that round them lay,
Strewing the turf's green slope.
A diamond light
(Whene'er the summer sun, declining, smote
A smooth rock wet with constant springs) was seen
Sparkling from out a copse-clad bank that rose
Fronting our cottage. Oft beside the hearth
Seated, with open door, often and long
Upon this restless lustre have I gazed,
That made my fancy restless as itself.
'Twas now for me a burnished silver shield
Suspended over a knight's tomb, who lay
Inglorious, buried in the dusky wood:
An entrance now into some magic cave
Or palace built by fairies of the rock;
Nor could I have been bribed to disenchant
The spectacle, by visiting the spot.
Thus wilful Fancy, in no hurtful mood,
Engrafted far-fetched shapes on feelings bred
By pure Imagination: busy Power
She was, and with her ready pupil turned
Instinctively to human passions, then
Least understood. Yet, 'mid the fervent swarm
Of these vagaries, with an eye so rich
As mine was through the bounty of a grand
And lovely region, I had forms distinct
To steady me: each airy thought revolved
Round a substantial centre, which at once
Incited it to motion, and controlled.
I did not pine like one in cities bred,
As was thy melancholy lot, dear Friend!
Great Spirit as thou art, in endless dreams
Of sickliness, disjoining, joining, things
Without the light of knowledge. Where the harm,
If, when the woodman languished with disease
Induced by sleeping nightly on the ground
Within his sod-built cabin, Indian-wise,
I called the pangs of disappointed love,
And all the sad etcetera of the wrong,
To help him to his grave? Meanwhile the man,
If not already from the woods retired
To die at home, was haply, as I knew,
Withering by slow degrees, 'mid gentle airs,
Birds, running streams, and hills so beautiful
On golden evenings, while the charcoal pile
Breathed up its smoke, an image of his ghost
Or spirit that full soon must take her flight.
Nor shall we not be tending towards that point
Of sound humanity to which our Tale
Leads, though by sinuous ways, if here I show
How Fancy, in a season when she wove
Those slender cords, to guide the unconscious Boy
For the Man's sake, could feed at Nature's call
Some pensive musings which might well beseem
Maturer years.
A grove there is whose boughs
Stretch from the western marge of Thurston-mere,
With length of shade so thick, that whoso glides
Along the line of low-roofed water, moves
As in a cloister. Once—while, in that shade
Loitering, I watched the golden beams of light
Flung from the setting sun, as they reposed
In silent beauty on the naked ridge
Of a high eastern hill—thus flowed my thoughts
In a pure stream of words fresh from the heart:
[1]Dear native Regions, wheresoe'er shall close
My mortal course, there will I think on you;
Dying, will cast on you a backward look;
Even as this setting sun (albeit the Vale
Is no where touched by one memorial gleam)
Doth with the fond remains of his last power
Still linger, and a farewell lustre sheds,
On the dear mountain-tops where first he rose.

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[1] See page 2.

Enough of humble arguments; recall,
My Song! those high emotions which thy voice
Has heretofore made known; that bursting forth
Of sympathy, inspiring and inspired,
When everywhere a vital pulse was felt,
And all the several frames of things, like stars,
Through every magnitude distinguishable,
Shone mutually indebted, or half lost
Each in the other's blaze, a galaxy
Of life and glory. In the midst stood Man,
Outwardly, inwardly contemplated,
As, of all visible natures, crown, though born
Of dust, and kindred to the worm; a Being,
Both in perception and discernment, first
In every capability of rapture,
Through the divine effect of power and love;
As, more than anything we know, instinct
With godhead, and, by reason and by will,
Acknowledging dependency sublime.

Ere long, the lonely mountains left, I moved,
Begirt, from day to day, with temporal shapes
Of vice and folly thrust upon my view,
Objects of sport, and ridicule, and scorn,
Manners and characters discriminate,
And little bustling passions that eclipse,
As well they might, the impersonated thought,
The idea, or abstraction of the kind.

An idler among academic bowers,
Such was my new condition, as at large
Has been set forth; yet here the vulgar light
Of present, actual, superficial life,
Gleaming through colouring of other times,
Old usages and local privilege,
Was welcomed, softened, if not solemnised.
This notwithstanding, being brought more near
To vice and guilt, forerunning wretchedness,
I trembled,—thought, at times, of human life
With an indefinite terror and dismay,
Such as the storms and angry elements
Had bred in me; but gloomier far, a dim
Analogy to uproar and misrule,
Disquiet, danger, and obscurity.

It might be told (but wherefore speak of things
Common to all?) that, seeing, I was led
Gravely to ponder—judging between good
And evil, not as for the mind's delight
But for her guidance—one who was to *act*,
As sometimes to the best of feeble means
I did, by human sympathy impelled:
And, through dislike and most offensive pain,
Was to the truth conducted; of this faith
Never forsaken, that, by acting well,
And understanding, I should learn to love
The end of life, and everything we know.

Grave Teacher, stern Preceptress! for at times
Thou canst put on an aspect most severe;
London, to thee I willingly return.
Erewhile my verse played idly with the flowers
Enwrought upon thy mantle; satisfied
With that amusement, and a simple look
Of child-like inquisition now and then
Cast upwards on thy countenance, to detect
Some inner meanings which might harbour there.
But how could I in mood so light indulge,
Keeping such fresh remembrance of the day,
When, having thridded the long labyrinth
Of the suburban villages, I first
Entered thy vast dominion? On the roof
Of an itinerant vehicle I sate,
With vulgar men about me, trivial forms
Of houses, pavement, streets, of men and things,—
Mean shapes on every side: but, at the instant,
When to myself it fairly might be said,
The threshold now is overpast, (how strange
That aught external to the living mind
Should have such mighty sway! yet so it was),
A weight of ages did at once descend
Upon my heart; no thought embodied, no
Distinct remembrances, but weight and power,—
Power growing under weight: alas! I feel

That I am trifling: 'twas a moment's pause,—
All that took place within me came and went
As in a moment; yet with Time it dwells,
And grateful memory, as a thing divine.

The curious traveller, who, from open day,
Hath passed with torches into some huge cave,
The Grotto of Antiparos, or the Den
In old time haunted by that Danish Witch,
Yordas; he looks around and sees the vault
Widening on all sides; sees, or thinks he sees,
Erelong, the massy roof above his head,
That instantly unsettles and recedes,—
Substance and shadow, light and darkness, all
Commingled, making up a canopy
Of shapes and forms and tendencies to shape
That shift and vanish, change and interchange
Like spectres,—ferment silent and sublime!
That after a short space works less and less,
Till, every effort, every motion gone,
The scene before him stands in perfect view
Exposed, and lifeless as a written book!—
But let him pause awhile, and look again,
And a new quickening shall succeed, at first
Beginning timidly, then creeping fast,
Till the whole cave, so late a senseless mass,
Busies the eye with images and forms
Boldly assembled,—here is shadowed forth
From the projections, wrinkles, cavities,
A variegated landscape,—there the shape
Of some gigantic warrior clad in mail,
The ghostly semblance of a hooded monk,
Veiled nun, or pilgrim resting on his staff:
Strange congregation! yet not slow to meet
Eyes that perceive through minds that can inspire.

Even in such sort had I at first been moved,
Nor otherwise continued to be moved,
As I explored the vast metropolis,
Fount of my country's destiny and the world's;
That great emporium, chronicle at once
And burial-place of passions, and their home
Imperial, their chief living residence.

With strong sensations teeming as it did
Of past and present, such a place must needs
Have pleased me, seeking knowledge at that time
Far less than craving power; yet knowledge came,
Sought or unsought, and influxes of power
Came, of themselves, or at her call derived
In fits of kindliest apprehensiveness,
From all sides, when whate'er was in itself
Capacious found, or seemed to find, in me
A correspondent amplitude of mind;
Such is the strength and glory of our youth!
The human nature unto which I felt
That I belonged, and reverenced with love,
Was not a punctual presence, but a spirit
Diffused through time and space, with aid derived
Of evidence from monuments, erect,
Prostrate, or leaning towards their common rest
In earth, the widely scattered wreck sublime
Of vanished nations, or more clearly drawn
From books and what they picture and record.

'Tis true, the history of our native land—
With those of Greece compared and popular Rome,
And in our high-wrought modern narratives
Stript of their harmonising soul, the life
Of manners and familiar incidents—
Had never much delighted me. And less
Than other intellects had mine been used
To lean upon extrinsic circumstance
Of record or tradition; but a sense
Of what in the Great City had been done
And suffered, and was doing, suffering, still,
Weighed with me, could support the test of thought;
And, in despite of all that had gone by,
Or was departing never to return,
There I conversed with majesty and power
Like independent natures. Hence the place
Was thronged with impregnations like the Wilds
In which my early feelings had been nursed—
Bare hills and valleys, full of caverns, rocks,
And audible seclusions, dashing lakes,
Echoes and waterfalls, and pointed crags
That into music touch the passing wind.
Here then my young imagination found
No uncongenial element; could here

Among new objects serve or give command,
Even as the heart's occasions might require,
To forward reason's else too-scrupulous march.
The effect was, still more elevated views
Of human nature. Neither vice nor guilt,
Debasement undergone by body or mind,
Nor all the misery forced upon my sight,
Misery not lightly passed, but sometimes scanned
Most feelingly, could overthrow my trust
In what we *may* become; induce belief
That I was ignorant, had been falsely taught,
A solitary, who with vain conceits
Had been inspired, and walked about in dreams.
From those sad scenes when meditation turned,
Lo! everything that was indeed divine
Retained its purity inviolate,
Nay brighter shone, by this portentous gloom
Set off; such opposition as aroused
The mind of Adam, yet in Paradise
Though fallen from bliss, when in the East he saw
[1] Darkness ere day's mid course, and morning light
More orient in the western cloud, that drew
O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
Descending slow with something heavenly fraught.

Add also, that among the multitudes
Of that huge city, oftentimes was seen
Affectingly set forth, more than elsewhere
Is possible, the unity of man,
One spirit over ignorance and vice
Predominant, in good and evil hearts;
One sense for moral judgments, as one eye
For the sun's light. The soul when smitten thus
By a sublime *idea*, whencesoe'er
Vouchsafed for union or communion, feeds
On the pure bliss, and takes her rest with God.

Thus from a very early age, O Friend!
My thoughts by slow gradations had been drawn
To human-kind, and to the good and ill
Of human life: Nature had led me on;
And oft amid the "busy hum" I seemed
To travel independent of her help,
As if I had forgotten her; but no,
The world of human-kind outweighed not hers
In my habitual thoughts; the scale of love,
Though filling daily, still was light, compared
With that in which *her* mighty objects lay.

BOOK NINTH

RESIDENCE IN FRANCE

EVEN as a river,—partly (it might seem)
Yielding to old remembrances, and swayed
In part by fear to shape a way direct,
That would engulph him soon in the ravenous sea—
Turns, and will measure back his course, far back,
Seeking the very regions which he crossed
In his first outset; so have we, my Friend!
Turned and returned with intricate delay.
Or as a traveller, who has gained the brow
Of some aerial Down, while there he halts
For breathing-time, is tempted to review
The region left behind him; and, if aught
Deserving notice have escaped regard,
Or been regarded with too careless eye,
Strives, from that height, with one and yet one more
Last look, to make the best amends he may:
So have we lingered. Now we start afresh
With courage, and new hope risen on our toil.
Fair greetings to this shapeless eagerness,
Whene'er it comes! needful in work so long,
Thrice needful to the argument which now
Awaits us! Oh, how much unlike the past!

Free as a colt at pasture on the hill,
I ranged at large, through London's wide domain,
Month after month. Obscurely did I live,
Not seeking frequent intercourse with men,
By literature, or elegance, or rank,
Distinguished. Scarcely was a year thus spent
Ere I forsook the crowded solitude,
With less regret for its luxurious pomp,
And all the nicely-guarded shows of art,

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[1] From Milton, *Par. Lost*, xi. 204.

Than for the humble book-stalls in the streets,
Exposed to eye and hand where'er I turned.

France lured me forth; the realm that I had crossed
So lately, journeying toward the snow-clad Alps.
But now, relinquishing the scrip and staff,
And all enjoyment which the summer sun
Sheds round the steps of those who meet the day
With motion constant as his own, I went
Prepared to sojourn in a pleasant town,
Washed by the current of the stately Loire.

Through Paris lay my readiest course, and there
Sojourning a few days, I visited
In haste, each spot of old or recent fame,
The latter chiefly; from the field of Mars
Down to the suburbs of St. Antony,
And from Mont Martre southward to the Dome
Of Geneviève. In both her clamorous Halls,
The National Synod and the Jacobins,
I saw the Revolutionary Power
Toss like a ship at anchor, rocked by storms;
The Arcades I traversed, in the Palace huge
Of Orleans; coasted round and round the line
Of Tavern, Brothel, Gaming-house, and Shop,
Great rendezvous of worst and best, the walk
Of all who had a purpose, or had not;
I stared and listened, with a stranger's ears,
To Hawkers and Haranguers, hubbub wild!
And hissing Factionists with ardent eyes,
In knots, or pairs, or single. Not a look
Hope takes, or Doubt or Fear is forced to wear,
But seemed there present; and I scanned them all,
Watched every gesture uncontrollable.
Of anger, and vexation, and despite,
All side by side, and struggling face to face,
With gaiety and dissolute idleness.

Where silent zephyrs sported with the dust
Of the Bastille, I sate in the open sun,
And from the rubbish gathered up a stone,
And pocketed the relic, in the guise
Of an enthusiast; yet, in honest truth,
I looked for something that I could not find,
Affecting more emotion than I felt;
For 'tis most certain, that these various sights,
However potent their first shock, with me
Appeared to recompense the traveller's pains
Less than the painted Magdalene of Le Brun,
A beauty exquisitely wrought, with hair
Dishevelled, gleaming eyes, and rueful cheek
Pale and bedropped with overflowing tears.

But hence to my more permanent abode
I hasten; there, by novelties in speech,
Domestic manners, customs, gestures, looks,
And all the attire of ordinary life,
Attention was engrossed; and, thus amused,
I stood 'mid those concussions, unconcerned,
Tranquil almost, and careless as a flower
Glassed in a green-house, or a parlour shrub
That spreads its leaves in unmolested peace,
While every bush and tree, the country through,
Is shaking to the roots: indifference this
Which may seem strange: but I was unprepared
With needful knowledge, had abruptly passed
Into a theatre, whose stage was filled
And busy with an action far advanced.
Like others, I had skimmed, and sometimes read
With care, the master pamphlets of the day;
Nor wanted such half-insight as grew wild
Upon that meagre soil, helped out by talk
And public news; but having never seen
A chronicle that might suffice to show
Whence the main organs of the public power
Had sprung, their transmigrations, when and how
Accomplished, giving thus unto events
A form and body; all things were to me

Loose and disjointed, and the affections left
Without a vital interest. At that time,
Moreover, the first storm was overblown,
And the strong hand of outward violence
Locked up in quiet. For myself, I fear
Now, in connection with so great a theme,
To speak (as I must be compelled to do)
Of one so unimportant; night by night
Did I frequent the formal haunts of men,
Whom, in the city, privilege of birth
Sequestered from the rest, societies
Polished in arts, and in punctilio versed;
Whence, and from deeper causes, all discourse
Of good and evil of the time was shunned
With scrupulous care; but these restrictions soon
Proved tedious, and I gradually withdrew
Into a noisier world, and thus ere long
Became a patriot; and my heart was all
Given to the people, and my love was theirs.

A band of military Officers,
Then stationed in the city, were the chief
Of my associates: some of these wore swords
That had been seasoned in the wars, and all
Were men well-born; the chivalry of France.
In age and temper differing, they had yet
One spirit ruling in each heart; alike
(Save only one, hereafter to be named)
Were bent upon undoing what was done:
This was their rest and only hope; therewith
No fear had they of bad becoming worse,
For worst to them was come; nor would have stirred,
Or deemed it worth a moment's thought to stir,
In anything, save only as the act
Looked thitherward. One, reckoning by years,
Was in the prime of manhood, and erewhile
He had sate lord in many tender hearts;
Though heedless of such honours now, and changed:
His temper was quite mastered by the times,
And they had blighted him, had eaten away
The beauty of his person, doing wrong
Alike to body and to mind: his port,
Which once had been erect and open, now
Was stooping and contracted, and a face,
Endowed by Nature with her fairest gifts
Of symmetry and light and bloom, expressed,
As much as any that was ever seen,
A ravage out of season, made by thoughts
Unhealthy and vexatious. With the hour,
That from the press of Paris duly brought
Its freight of public news, the fever came,
A punctual visitant, to shake this man,
Disarmed his voice and fanned his yellow cheek
Into a thousand colours; while he read,
Or mused, his sword was haunted by his touch
Continually, like an uneasy place
In his own body. 'Twas in truth an hour
Of universal ferment; mildest men
Were agitated; and commotions, strife
Of passion and opinion, filled the walls
Of peaceful houses with unquiet sounds.
The soil of common life was, at that time,
Too hot to tread upon. Oft said I then,
And not then only, "What a mockery this
Of history, the past and that to come!
Now do I feel how all men are deceived,
Reading of nations and their works, in faith,
Faith given to vanity and emptiness;
Oh! laughter for the page that would reflect
To future times the face of what now is!"
The land all swarmed with passion, like a plain
Devoured by locusts,—Carra, Gorsas,—add
A hundred other names, forgotten now,
Nor to be heard of more; yet, they were powers,
Like earthquakes, shocks repeated day by day,
And felt through every nook of town and field.

Such was the state of things. Meanwhile the chief
Of my associates stood prepared for flight
To augment the band of emigrants in arms
Upon the borders of the Rhine, and leagued
With foreign foes mustered for instant war.

This was their undisguised intent, and they
Were waiting with the whole of their desires
The moment to depart.
An Englishman,
Born in a land whose very name appeared
To license some unruliness of mind;
A stranger, with youth's further privilege,
And the indulgence that a half-learnt speech
Wins from the courteous; I, who had been else
Shunned and not tolerated, freely lived
With these defenders of the Crown, and talked,
And heard their notions; nor did they disdain
The wish to bring me over to their cause.

But though untaught by thinking or by books
To reason well of polity or law,
And nice distinctions, then on every tongue,
Of natural rights and civil; and to acts
Of nations and their passing interests,
(If with unworldly ends and aims compared)
Almost indifferent, even the historian's tale
Prizing but little otherwise than I prized
Tales of the poets, as it made the heart
Beat high, and filled the fancy with fair forms,
Old heroes and their sufferings and their deeds;
Yet in the regal sceptre, and the pomp
Of orders and degrees, I nothing found
Then, or had ever, even in crudest youth,
That dazzled me, but rather what I mourned
And ill could brook, beholding that the best
Ruled not, and feeling that they ought to rule.

For, born in a poor district, and which yet
Retaineth more of ancient homeliness,
Than any other nook of English ground,
It was my fortune scarcely to have seen,
Through the whole tenor of my school-day time,
The face of one, who, whether boy or man,
Was vested with attention or respect
Through claims of wealth or blood; nor was it least
Of many benefits, in later years
Derived from academic institutes
And rules, that they held something up to view
Of a Republic, where all stood thus far
Upon equal ground; that we were brothers all
In honour, as in one community,
Scholars and gentlemen; where, furthermore,
Distinction open lay to all that came,
And wealth and titles were in less esteem
Than talents, worth, and prosperous industry.
Add unto this, subservience from the first
To presences of God's mysterious power
Made manifest in Nature's sovereignty,
And fellowship with venerable books,
To sanction the proud workings of the soul,
And mountain liberty. It could not be
But that one tutored thus should look with awe
Upon the faculties of man, receive
Gladly the highest promises, and hail,
As best, the government of equal rights
And individual worth. And hence, O Friend!
If at the first great outbreak I rejoiced
Less than might well befit my youth, the cause
In part lay here, that unto me the events
Seemed nothing out of nature's certain course,
A gift that was come rather late than soon.
No wonder, then, if advocates like these,
Inflamed by passion, blind with prejudice,
And stung with injury, at this riper day,
Were impotent to make my hopes put on
The shape of theirs, my understanding bend
In honour to their honour: zeal, which yet
Had slumbered, now in opposition burst
Forth like a Polar summer: every word
They uttered was a dart, by counter-winds
Blown back upon themselves; their reason seemed
Confusion-stricken by a higher power
Than human understanding, their discourse
Maimed, spiritless; and, in their weakness strong,
I triumphed.
Meantime, day by day, the roads
Were crowded with the bravest youth of France,
And all the promptest of her spirits, linked

In gallant soldiership, and posting on
To meet the war upon her frontier bounds.
Yet at this very moment do tears start
Into mine eyes: I do not say I weep—
I wept not then,—but tears have dimmed my sight,
In memory of the farewells of that time,
Domestic severings, female fortitude
At dearest separation, patriot love
And self-devotion, and terrestrial hope,
Encouraged with a martyr's confidence;
Even files of strangers merely seen but once,
And for a moment, men from far with sound
Of music, martial tunes, and banners spread,
Entering the city, here and there a face,
Or person, singled out among the rest,
Yet still a stranger and beloved as such;
Even by these passing spectacles my heart
Was oftentimes uplifted, and they seemed
Arguments sent from Heaven to prove the cause
Good, pure, which no one could stand up against,
Who was not lost, abandoned, selfish, proud,
Mean, miserable, wilfully depraved,
Hater perverse of equity and truth.

Among that band of Officers was one,
Already hinted at, of other mould—
A patriot, thence rejected by the rest,
And with an oriental loathing spurned,
As of a different caste. A meeker man
Than this lived never, nor a more benign,
Meek though enthusiastic. Injuries
Made *him* more gracious, and his nature then
Did breathe its sweetness out most sensibly,
As aromatic flowers on Alpine turf,
When foot hath crushed them. He through the events
Of that great change wandered in perfect faith,
As through a book, an old romance, or tale
Of Fairy, or some dream of actions wrought
Behind the summer clouds. By birth he ranked
With the most noble, but unto the poor
Among mankind he was in service bound,
As by some tie invisible, oaths professed
To a religious order. Man he loved
As man; and, to the mean and the obscure,
And all the homely in their homely works,
Transferred a courtesy which had no air
Of condescension; but did rather seem
A passion and a gallantry, like that
Which he, a soldier, in his idler day
Had paid to woman: somewhat vain he was,
Or seemed so, yet it was not vanity,
But fondness, and a kind of radiant joy
Diffused around him, while he was intent
On works of love or freedom, or revolved
Complacently the progress of a cause,
Whereof he was a part: yet this was meek
And placid, and took nothing from the man
That was delightful. Oft in solitude
With him did I discourse about the end
Of civil government, and its wisest forms;
Of ancient loyalty, and chartered rights,
Custom and habit, novelty and change;
Of self-respect, and virtue in the few
For patrimonial honour set apart,
And ignorance in the labouring multitude.
For he, to all intolerance indisposed,
Balanced these contemplations in his mind;
And I, who at that time was scarcely dipped
Into the turmoil, bore a sounder judgment
Than later days allowed; carried about me,
With less alloy to its integrity,
The experience of past ages, as, through help
Of books and common life, it makes sure way
To youthful minds, by objects over near
Not pressed upon, nor dazzled or misled
By struggling with the crowd for present ends.

But though not deaf, nor obstinate to find
Error without excuse upon the side
Of them who strove against us, more delight
We took, and let this freely be confessed,
In painting to ourselves the miseries
Of royal courts, and that voluptuous life
Unfeeling, where the man who is of soul
The meanest thrives the most; where dignity,
True personal dignity, abideth not;
A light, a cruel, and vain world cut off
From the natural inlets of just sentiment,
From lowly sympathy and chastening truth;
Where good and evil interchange their names,

And thirst for bloody spoils abroad is paired
With vice at home. We added dearest themes—
Man and his noble nature, as it is
The gift which God has placed within his power,
His blind desires and steady faculties
Capable of clear truth, the one to break
Bondage, the other to build liberty
On firm foundations, making social life,
Through knowledge spreading and imperishable,
As just in regulation, and as pure
As individual in the wise and good.

We summoned up the honourable deeds
Of ancient Story, thought of each bright spot,
That would be found in all recorded time,
Of truth preserved and error passed away;
Of single spirits that catch the flame from Heaven,
And how the multitudes of men will feed
And fan each other; thought of sects, how keen
They are to put the appropriate nature on,
Triumphant over every obstacle
Of custom, language, country, love, or hate,
And what they do and suffer for their creed;
How far they travel, and how long endure;
How quickly mighty Nations have been formed,
From least beginnings; how, together locked
By new opinions, scattered tribes have made
One body, spreading wide as clouds in heaven.
To aspirations then of our own minds
Did we appeal; and, finally, beheld
A living confirmation of the whole
Before us, in a people from the depth
Of shameful imbecility uprisen,
Fresh as the morning star. Elate we looked
Upon their virtues; saw, in rudest men,
Self-sacrifice the firmest; generous love,
And continence of mind, and sense of right,
Uppermost in the midst of fiercest strife.

Oh, sweet it is, in academic groves,
Or such retirement, Friend! as we have known
In the green dales beside our Rotha's stream,
Greta, or Derwent, or some nameless rill,
To ruminate, with interchange of talk,
On rational liberty, and hope in man,
Justice and peace. But far more sweet such toil—
Toil, say I, for it leads to thoughts abstruse—
If nature then be standing on the brink
Of some great trial, and we hear the voice
Of one devoted,—one whom circumstance
Hath called upon to embody his deep sense
In action, give it outwardly a shape,
And that of benediction, to the world.
Then doubt is not, and truth is more than truth,—
A hope it is, and a desire; a creed
Of zeal, by an authority Divine
Sanctioned, of danger, difficulty, or death.
Such conversation, under Attic shades,
Did Dion hold with Plato; ripened thus
For a Deliverer's glorious task,—and such
He, on that ministry already bound,
Held with Eudemus and Timonides,
Surrounded by adventurers in arms,
When those two vessels with their daring freight,
For the Sicilian Tyrant's overthrow,
Sailed from Zacynthus,—philosophic war,
Led by Philosophers. With harder fate,
Though like ambition, such was he, O Friend!
Of whom I speak. So Beaupuis (let the name
Stand near the worthiest of Antiquity)
Fashioned his life; and many a long discourse,
With like persuasion honoured, we maintained:
He, on his part, accoutred for the worst,
He perished fighting, in supreme command,
Upon the borders of the unhappy Loire,
For liberty, against deluded men,
His fellow-countrymen; and yet most blessed
In this, that he the fate of later times
Lived not to see, nor what we now behold,
Who have as ardent hearts as he had then.

Along that very Loire, with festal mirth
Resounding at all hours, and innocent yet

Of civil slaughter, was our frequent walk;
Or in wide forests of continuous shade,
Lofty and over-arched, with open space
Beneath the trees, clear footing many a mile—
A solemn region. Oft amid those haunts,
From earnest dialogues I slipped in thought,
And let remembrance steal to other times,
When, o'er those interwoven roots, moss-clad,
And smooth as marble or a waveless sea,
Some Hermit, from his cell forth-strayed, might pace
In sylvan meditation undisturbed;
As on the pavement of a Gothic church
Walks a lone Monk, when service hath expired,
In peace and silence. But if e'er was heard,—
Heard, though unseen,—a devious traveller,
Retiring or approaching from afar
With speed and echoes loud of trampling hoofs
From the hard floor reverberated, then
It was Angelica thundering through the woods
Upon her palfrey, or that gentle maid
Erminia, fugitive as fair as she.
Sometimes methought I saw a pair of knights
Joust underneath the trees, that as in storm
Rocked high above their heads; anon, the din
Of boisterous merriment, and music's roar,
In sudden proclamation, burst from haunt
Of Satyrs in some viewless glade, with dance
Rejoicing o'er a female in the midst,
A mortal beauty, their unhappy thrall.
The width of those huge forests, unto me
A novel scene, did often in this way
Master my fancy while I wandered on
With that revered companion. And sometimes—
When to a convent in a meadow green,
By a brook-side, we came, a roofless pile,
And not by reverential touch of Time
Dismantled, but by violence abrupt—
In spite of those heart-bracing colloquies,
In spite of real fervour, and of that
Less genuine and wrought up within myself—
I could not but bewail a wrong so harsh,
And for the Matin-bell to sound no more
Grieved, and the twilight taper, and the cross
High on the topmost pinnacle, a sign
(How welcome to the weary traveller's eyes!)
Of hospitality and peaceful rest.
And when the partner of those varied walks
Pointed upon occasion to the site
Of Romorentin, home of ancient kings,
To the imperial edifice of Blois,
Or to that rural castle, name now slipped
From my remembrance, where a lady lodged,
By the first Francis wooed, and bound to him
In chains of mutual passion, from the tower,
As a tradition of the country tells,
Practised to commune with her royal knight
By cressets and love-beacons, intercourse
'Twixt her high-seated residence and his
Far off at Chambord on the plain beneath;
Even here, though less than with the peaceful house
Religious, 'mid those frequent monuments
Of Kings, their vices and their better deeds,
Imagination, potent to inflame
At times with virtuous wrath and noble scorn,
Did also often mitigate the force
Of civic prejudice, the bigotry,
So call it, of a youthful patriot's mind;
And on these spots with many gleams I looked
Of chivalrous delight. Yet not the less,
Hatred of absolute rule, where will of one
Is law for all, and of that barren pride
In them who, by immunities unjust,
Between the sovereign and the people stand,
His helper and not theirs, laid stronger hold
Daily upon me, mixed with pity too
And love; for where hope is, there love will be
For the abject multitude. And when we chanced
One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl,
Who crept along fitting her languid gait
Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord
Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid hands

Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
Of solitude, and at the sight my friend
In agitation said, "'Tis against *that*
That we are fighting," I with him believed
That a benignant spirit was abroad
Which might not be withstood, that poverty
Abject as this would in a little time
Be found no more, that we should see the earth
Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil,
All institutes for ever blotted out
That legalised exclusion, empty pomp
Abolished, sensual state and cruel power
Whether by edict of the one or few;
And finally, as sum and crown of all,
Should see the people having a strong hand
In framing their own laws; whence better days
To all mankind. But, these things set apart,
Was not this single confidence enough
To animate the mind that ever turned
A thought to human welfare? That henceforth
Captivity by mandate without law
Should cease; and open accusation lead
To sentence in the hearing of the world,
And open punishment, if not the air
Be free to breathe in, and the heart of man
Dread nothing. From this height I shall not stoop
To humbler matter that detained us oft
In thought or conversation, public acts,
And public persons, and emotions wrought
Within the breast, as ever-varying winds
Of record or report swept over us;
But I might here, instead, repeat a tale,[1]
Told by my Patriot friend, of sad events,
That prove to what low depth had struck the roots,
How widely spread the boughs, of that old tree
Which, as a deadly mischief, and a foul
And black dishonour, France was weary of.

Oh, happy time of youthful lovers, (thus
The story might begin,) oh, balmy time,
In which a love-knot, on a lady's brow,
Is fairer than the fairest star in Heaven!
So might—and with that prelude *did* begin
The record; and, in faithful verse, was given
The doleful sequel.

But our little bark
On a strong river boldly hath been launched;
And from the driving current should we turn
To loiter wilfully within a creek,
Howe'er attractive, Fellow voyager!
Would'st thou not chide? Yet deem not my pains lost:
For Vaudracour and Julia (so were named
The ill-fated pair) in that plain tale will draw
Tears from the hearts of others, when their own
Shall beat no more. Thou, also, there may'st read,
At leisure, how the enamoured youth was driven,
By public power abased, to fatal crime,
Nature's rebellion against monstrous law;
How, between heart and heart, oppression thrust
Her mandates, severing whom true love had joined,
Harassing both; until he sank and pressed
The couch his fate had made for him; supine,
Save when the stings of viperous remorse,
Trying their strength, enforced him to start up,
Aghast and prayerless. Into a deep wood
He fled, to shun the haunts of human kind;
There dwelt, weakened in spirit more and more;
Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through France
Full speedily resounded, public hope,
Or personal memory of his own worst wrongs,
Rouse him; but, hidden in those gloomy shades,
His days he wasted,—an imbecile mind.

Book Tenth

RESIDENCE IN FRANCE (*continued*)

It was a beautiful and silent day
That overspread the countenance of earth,
Then fading with unusual quietness,—

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[1] See "Vaudracour and Julia," p. 221.

A day as beautiful as e'er was given
To soothe regret, though deepening what it soothed,
When by the gliding Loire I paused, and cast
Upon his rich domains, vineyard and tilth,
Green meadow-ground, and many-coloured woods,
Again, and yet again, a farewell look;
Then from the quiet of that scene passed on,
Bound to the fierce Metropolis. From his throne
The King had fallen, and that invading host—
Presumptuous cloud, on whose black front was written
The tender mercies of the dismal wind
That bore it—on the plains of Liberty
Had burst innocuous. Say in bolder words,
They—who had come elate as eastern hunters
Banded beneath the Great Mogul, when he
Erewhile went forth from Agra or Lahore,
Rajahs and Omrahs in his train, intent
To drive their prey enclosed within a ring
Wide as a province, but, the signal given,
Before the point of the life-threatening spear
Narrowing itself by moments—they, rash men,
Had seen the anticipated quarry turned
Into avengers, from whose wrath they fled
In terror. Disappointment and dismay
Remained for all whose fancies had run wild
With evil expectations; confidence
And perfect triumph for the better cause.

The State—as if to stamp the final seal
On her security, and to the world
Show what she was, a high and fearless soul,
Exulting in defiance, or heart-stung
By sharp resentment, or belike to taunt
With spiteful gratitude the baffled League,
That had stirred up her slackening faculties
To a new transition—when the King was crushed,
Spared not the empty throne, and in proud haste
Assumed the body and venerable name
Of a Republic. Lamentable crimes,
'Tis true, had gone before this hour, dire work
Of massacre, in which the senseless sword
Was prayed to as a judge; but these were past,
Earth free from them for ever, as was thought,—
Ephemeral monsters, to be seen but once!
Things that could only show themselves and die.

Cheered with this hope, to Paris I returned,
And ranged, with ardour heretofore unfelt,
The spacious city, and in progress passed
The prison where the unhappy Monarch lay,
Associate with his children and his wife
In bondage; and the palace, lately stormed
With roar of cannon by a furious host.
I crossed the square (an empty area then!)
Of the Carrousel, where so late had lain
The dead, upon the dying heaped, and gazed
On this and other spots, as doth a man
Upon a volume whose contents he knows
Are memorable, but from him locked up,
Being written in a tongue he cannot read,
So that he questions the mute leaves with pain,
And half upbraids their silence. But that night
I felt most deeply in what world I was,
What ground I trod on, and what air I breathed.
High was my room and lonely, near the roof
Of a large mansion or hotel, a lodge
That would have pleased me in more quiet times;
Nor was it wholly without pleasure then.
With unextinguished taper I kept watch,
Reading at intervals; the fear gone by
Pressed on me almost like a fear to come.
I thought of those September massacres,
Divided from me by one little month,
Saw them and touched: the rest was conjured up
From tragic fictions or true history,
Remembrances and dim admonishments.
The horse is taught his manage, and no star
Of wildest course but treads back his own steps;
For the spent hurricane the air provides
As fierce a successor; the tide retreats

But to return out of its hiding-place
In the great deep; all things have second birth;
The earthquake is not satisfied at once;
And in this way I wrought upon myself,
Until I seemed to hear a voice that cried,
To the whole city, "Sleep no more." The trance
Fled with the voice to which it had given birth;
But vainly comments of a calmer mind
Promised soft peace and sweet forgetfulness.
The place, all hushed and silent as it was,
Appeared unfit for the repose of night,
Defenceless as a wood where tigers roam.

With early morning towards the Palace-walk
Of Orleans eagerly I turned: as yet
The streets were still; not so those long Arcades;
There, 'mid a peal of ill-matched sounds and cries,
That greeted me on entering, I could hear
Shrill voices from the hawkers in the throng,
Bawling, "Denunciation of the Crimes
Of Maximilian Robespierre;" the hand,
Prompt as the voice, held forth a printed speech,
The same that had been recently pronounced,
When Robespierre, not ignorant for what mark
Some words of indirect reproof had been
Intended, rose in hardihood, and dared
The man who had an ill surmise of him
To bring his charge in openness; whereat,
When a dead pause ensued, and no one stirred,
In silence of all present, from his seat
Louvet walked single through the avenue,
And took his station in the Tribune, saying,
"I, Robespierre, accuse thee!" Well is known
The inglorious issue of that charge, and how
He, who had launched the startling thunder-bolt,
The one bold man, whose voice the attack had sounded,
Was left without a follower to discharge
His perilous duty, and retire lamenting
That Heaven's best aid is wasted upon men
Who to themselves are false.
But these are things
Of which I speak, only as they were storm
Or sunshine to my individual mind,
No further. Let me then relate that now—
In some sort seeing with my proper eyes
That Liberty, and Life, and Death, would soon
To the remotest corners of the land
Lie in the arbitrement of those who ruled
The capital City; what was struggled for,
And by what combatants victory must be won;
The indecision on their part whose aim
Seemed best, and the straightforward path of those
Who in attack or in defence were strong
Through their impiety—my inmost soul
Was agitated; yea, I could almost
Have prayed that throughout earth upon all men,
By patient exercise of reason made
Worthy of liberty, all spirits filled
With zeal expanding in Truth's holy light,
The gift of tongues might fall, and power arrive
From the four quarters of the winds to do
For France, what without help she could not do,
A work of honour; think not that to this
I added, work of safety: from all doubt
Or trepidation for the end of things
Far was I, far as angels are from guilt.

Yet did I grieve, nor only grieved, but thought
Of opposition and of remedies:
An insignificant stranger and obscure,
And one, moreover, little graced with power
Of eloquence even in my native speech,
And all unfit for tumult or intrigue,
Yet would I at this time with willing heart
Have undertaken for a cause so great
Service however dangerous. I revolved,
How much the destiny of Man had still
Hung upon single persons; that there was,
Transcendent to all local patrimony,
One nature, as there is one sun in heaven;
That objects, even as they are great, thereby
Do come within the reach of humblest eyes;
That Man is only weak through his mistrust
And want of hope where evidence divine
Proclaims to him that hope should be most sure;
Nor did the inexperience of my youth

Preclude conviction, that a spirit strong
In hope, and trained to noble aspirations,
A spirit thoroughly faithful to itself,
Is for Society's unreasoning herd
A domineering instinct, serves at once
For way and guide, a fluent receptacle
That gathers up each petty straggling rill
And vein of water, glad to be rolled on
In safe obedience; that a mind, whose rest
Is where it ought to be, in self-restraint,
In circumspection and simplicity,
Falls rarely in entire discomfiture
Below its aim, or meets with, from without,
A treachery that foils it or defeats;
And, lastly, if the means on human will,
Frail human will, dependent should betray
Him who too boldly trusted them, I felt
That 'mid the loud distractions of the world
A sovereign voice subsists within the soul,
Arbiter undisturbed of right and wrong,
Of life and death, in majesty severe
Enjoining, as may best promote the aims
Of truth and justice, either sacrifice,
From whatsoever region of our cares
Or our infirm affections Nature pleads,
Earnest and blind, against the stern decree.

On the other side, I called to mind those truths
That are the commonplaces of the schools—
(A theme for boys, too hackneyed for their sires,)
Yet, with a revelation's liveliness,
In all their comprehensive bearings known
And visible to philosophers of old,
Men who, to business of the world untrained,
Lived in the shade; and to Harmodius known
And his compeer Aristogiton, known
To Brutus—that tyrannic power is weak,
Hath neither gratitude, nor faith, nor love,
Nor the support of good or evil men
To trust in; that the godhead which is ours
Can never utterly be charmed or stilled;
That nothing hath a natural right to last
But equity and reason; that all else
Meets foes irreconcilable, and at best
Lives only by variety of disease.

Well might my wishes be intense, my thoughts
Strong and perturbed, not doubting at that time
But that the virtue of one paramount mind
Would have abashed those impious crests—have quelled
Outrage and bloody power, and—in despite
Of what the People long had been and were
Through ignorance and false teaching, sadder proof
Of immaturity, and—in the teeth
Of desperate opposition from without—
Have cleared a passage for just government,
And left a solid birthright to the State,
Redeemed, according to example given
By ancient lawgivers.
In this frame of mind,
Dragged by a chain of harsh necessity,
So seemed it,—now I thankfully acknowledge,
Forced by the gracious providence of Heaven,—
To England I returned, else (though assured
That I both was and must be of small weight,
No better than a landsman on the deck
Of a ship struggling with a hideous storm)
Doubtless, I should have then made common cause
With some who perished; haply perished too,
A poor mistaken and bewildered offering,—
Should to the breast of Nature have gone back,
With all my resolutions, all my hopes,
A Poet only to myself, to men
Useless, and even, beloved Friend! a soul
To thee unknown!
Twice had the trees let fall
Their leaves, as often Winter had put on
His hoary crown, since I had seen the surge
Beat against Albion's shore, since ear of mine
Had caught the accents of my native speech
Upon our native country's sacred ground.
A patriot of the world, how could I glide
Into communion with her sylvan shades,
Erewhile my tuneful haunt? It pleased me more
To abide in the great City, where I found
The general air still busy with the stir
Of that first memorable onset made
By a strong levy of humanity
Upon the traffickers in Negro blood;
Effort which, though defeated, had recalled

To notice old forgotten principles,
And through the nation spread a novel heat
Of virtuous feeling. For myself, I own
That this particular strife had wanted power
To rivet my affections; nor did now
Its unsuccessful issue much excite
My sorrow; for I brought with me the faith
That, if France prospered, good men would not long
Pay fruitless worship to humanity,
And this most rotten branch of human shame,
Object, so seemed it, of superfluous pains
Would fall together with its parent tree.
What, then, were my emotions, when in arms
Britain put forth her free-born strength in league,
Oh, pity and shame! with those confederate Powers!
Not in my single self alone I found,
But in the minds of all ingenuous youth,
Change and subversion from that hour. No shock
Given to my moral nature had I known
Down to that very moment; neither lapse
Nor turn of sentiment that might be named
A revolution, save at this one time;
All else was progress on the self-same path
On which, with a diversity of pace,
I had been travelling: this a stride at once
Into another region. As a light
And pliant harebell, swinging in the breeze
On some grey rock—its birth-place—so had I
Wantoned, fast rooted on the ancient tower
Of my beloved country, wishing not
A happier fortune than to wither there:
Now was I from that pleasant station torn
And tossed about in whirlwind. I rejoiced,
Yea, afterwards—truth most painful to record!—
Exulted, in the triumph of my soul,
When Englishmen by thousands were o'erthrown,
Left without glory on the field, or driven,
Brave hearts! to shameful flight. It was a grief,—
Grief call it not, 'twas anything but that,—
A conflict of sensations without name,
Of which *he* only, who may love the sight
Of a village steeple, as I do, can judge,
When, in the congregation bending all
To their great Father, prayers were offered up,
Or praises for our country's victories;
And, 'mid the simple worshippers, perchance
I only, like an uninvited guest
Whom no one owned, sate silent, shall I add,
Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come.

Oh! much have they to account for, who could tear,
By violence, at one decisive rent,
From the best youth in England their dear pride,
Their joy, in England; this, too, at a time
In which worst losses easily might wean
The best of names, when patriotic love
Did of itself in modesty give way,
Like the Precursor when the Deity
Is come Whose harbinger he was; a time
In which apostasy from ancient faith
Seemed but conversion to a higher creed;
Withal a season dangerous and wild,
A time when sage Experience would have snatched
Flowers out of any hedge-row to compose
A chaplet in contempt of his grey locks.

When the proud fleet that bears the red-cross flag
In that unworthy service was prepared
To mingle, I beheld the vessels lie,
A brood of gallant creatures, on the deep;
I saw them in their rest, a sojourner
Through a whole month of calm and glassy days
In that delightful island which protects
Their place of convocation—there I heard,
Each evening, pacing by the still sea-shore,
A monitory sound that never failed,—
The sunset cannon. While the orb went down
In the tranquillity of nature, came
That voice, ill requiem! seldom heard by me
Without a spirit overcast by dark
Imaginations, sense of woes to come,
Sorrow for human kind, and pain of heart.

In France, the men, who, for their desperate ends,
Had plucked up mercy by the roots, were glad

Of this new enemy. Tyrants, strong before
In wicked pleas, were strong as demons now;
And thus, on every side beset with foes,
The goaded land waxed mad; the crimes of few
Spread into madness of the many; blasts
From hell came sanctified like airs from heaven.
The sternness of the just, the faith of those
Who doubted not that Providence had times
Of vengeful retribution, theirs who throned
The human Understanding paramount
And made of that their God, the hopes of men
Who were content to barter short-lived pangs
For a paradise of ages, the blind rage
Of insolent tempers, the light vanity
Of intermeddlers, steady purposes
Of the suspicious, slips of the indiscreet,
And all the accidents of life—were pressed
Into one service, busy with one work.
The Senate stood aghast, her prudence quenched,
Her wisdom stifled, and her justice scared,
Her frenzy only active to extol
Past outrages, and shape the way for new,
Which no one dared to oppose or mitigate.

Domestic carnage now filled the whole year
With feast-days; old men from the chimney-nook,
The maiden from the bosom of her love,
The mother from the cradle of her babe,
The warrior from the field—all perished, all—
Friends, enemies, of all parties, ages, ranks,
Head after head, and never heads enough
For those that bade them fall. They found their joy,
They made it proudly, eager as a child,
(If like desires of innocent little ones
May with such heinous appetites be compared),
Pleased in some open field to exercise
A toy that mimics with revolving wings
The motion of a wind-mill; though the air
Do of itself blow fresh, and make the vanes
Spin in his eyesight, *that* contents him not,
But with the plaything at arm's length, he sets
His front against the blast, and runs amain,
That it may whirl the faster.
Amid the depth
Of those enormities, even thinking minds
Forgot, at seasons, whence they had their being
Forgot that such a sound was ever heard
As Liberty upon earth: yet all beneath
Her innocent authority was wrought,
Nor could have been, without her blessed name.
The illustrious wife of Roland, in the hour
Of her composure, felt that agony,
And gave it vent in her last words. O Friend!
It was a lamentable time for man,
Whether a hope had e'er been his or not:
A woful time for them whose hopes survived
The shock; most woful for those few who still
Were flattered, and had trust in human kind:
They had the deepest feeling of the grief.
Meanwhile the Invaders fared as they deserved:
The Herculean Commonwealth had put forth her arms,
And throttled with an infant godhead's might
The snakes about her cradle; that was well,
And as it should be; yet no cure for them
Whose souls were sick with pain of what would be
Hereafter brought in charge against mankind.
Most melancholy at that time, O Friend!
Were my day-thoughts,—my nights were miserable;
Through months, through years, long after the last beat
Of those atrocities, the hour of sleep
To me came rarely charged with natural gifts,
Such ghastly visions had I of despair
And tyranny, and implements of death;
And innocent victims sinking under fear,
And momentary hope, and worn-out prayer,
Each in his separate cell, or penned in crowds
For sacrifice, and struggling with fond mirth
And levity in dungeons, where the dust
Was laid with tears. Then suddenly the scene
Changed, and the unbroken dream entangled me

In long orations, which I strove to plead
Before unjust tribunals,—with a voice
Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,
Death-like, of treacherous desertion, felt
In the last place of refuge—my own soul.

When I began in youth's delightful prime
To yield myself to Nature, when that strong
And holy passion overcame me first,
Nor day nor night, evening or morn, was free
From its oppression. But, O Power Supreme!
Without Whose call this world would cease to breathe
Who from the fountain of Thy grace dost fill
The veins that branch through every frame of life,
Making man what he is, creature divine,
In single or in social eminence,
Above the rest raised infinite ascents
When reason that enables him to be
Is not sequestered—what a change is here!
How different ritual for this after-worship,
What countenance to promote this second love!
The first was service paid to things which lie
Guarded within the bosom of Thy will.
Therefore to serve was high beatitude;
Tumult was therefore gladness, and the fear
Ennobling, venerable; sleep secure,
And waking thoughts more rich than happiest dreams.

But as the ancient Prophets, borne aloft
In vision, yet constrained by natural laws
With them to take a troubled human heart,
Wanted not consolations, nor a creed
Of reconcilement, then when they denounced,
On towns and cities, wallowing in the abyss
Of their offences, punishment to come;
Or saw, like other men, with bodily eyes,
Before them, in some desolated place,
The wrath consummate and the threat fulfilled;
So, with devout humility be it said,
So, did a portion of that spirit fall
On me uplifted from the vantage-ground
Of pity and sorrow to a state of being
That through the time's exceeding fierceness saw
Glimpses of retribution, terrible,
And in the order of sublime behests:
But, even if that were not, amid the awe
Of unintelligible chastisement,
Not only acquiescences of faith
Survived, but daring sympathies with power,
Motions not treacherous or profane, else why
Within the folds of no ungentle breast
Their dread vibration to this hour prolonged?
Wild blasts of music thus could find their way
Into the midst of turbulent events;
So that worst tempests might be listened to.
Then was the truth received into my heart,
That, under heaviest sorrow earth can bring,
If from the affliction somewhere do not grow
Honour which could not else have been, a faith,
An elevation, and a sanctity,
If new strength be not given nor old restored,
The blame is ours, not Nature's. When a taunt
Was taken up by scoffers in their pride,
Saying, "Behold the harvest that we reap
From popular government and equality,"
I clearly saw that neither these nor aught
Of wild belief engrafted on their names
By false philosophy had caused the woe,
But a terrific reservoir of guilt
And ignorance filled up from age to age,
That could no longer hold its loathsome charge,
But burst and spread in deluge through the land.

And as the desert hath green spots, the sea
Small islands scattered amid stormy waves,
So *that* disastrous period did not want
Bright sprinklings of all human excellence
To which the silver wands of saints in Heaven
Might point with rapturous joy. Yet not the less,
For those examples, in no age surpassed,
Of fortitude and energy and love,
And human nature faithful to herself
Under worst trials, was I driven to think
Of the glad times when first I traversed France
A youthful pilgrim; above all reviewed
That eventide, when under windows bright
With happy faces and with garlands hung

And through a rainbow-arch that spanned the street,
Triumphal pomp for liberty confirmed,
I paced, a dear companion at my side,
The town of Arras, whence with promise high
Issued, on delegation to sustain
Humanity and right, *that* Robespierre,
He who thereafter, and in how short time!
Wielded the sceptre of the Atheist crew.
When the calamity spread far and wide—
And this same city, that did then appear
To outrun the rest in exultation, groaned
Under the vengeance of her cruel son,
As Lear reproached the winds—I could almost
Have quarrelled with that blameless spectacle
For lingering yet an image in my mind
To mock me under such a strange reverse.

O Friend! few happier moments have been mine
Than that which told the downfall of this Tribe
So dreaded, so abhorred. The day deserves
A separate record. Over the smooth sands
Of Leven's ample estuary lay
My journey, and beneath a genial sun,
With distant prospect among gleams of sky
And clouds and intermingling mountain tops,
In one inseparable glory clad,
Creatures of one ethereal substance met
In consistory, like a diadem
Or crown of burning seraphs as they sit
In the empyrean. Underneath that pomp
Celestial, lay unseen the pastoral vales
Among whose happy fields I had grown up
From childhood. On the fulgent spectacle,
That neither passed away nor changed, I gazed
Enrapt; but brightest things are wont to draw
Sad opposites out of the inner heart,
As even their pensive influence drew from mine.
How could it otherwise? for not in vain
That very morning had I turned aside
To seek the ground where, 'mid a throng of graves,
An honoured teacher of my youth was laid,
And on the stone were graven by his desire
Lines from the churchyard elegy of Gray.
This faithful guide, speaking from his death-bed,
Added no farewell to his parting counsel,
But said to me, "My head will soon lie low;"
And when I saw the turf that covered him,
After the lapse of full eight years, those words,
With sound of voice and countenance of the Man,
Came back upon me, so that some few tears
Fell from me in my own despite. But now
I thought, still traversing that widespread plain,
With tender pleasure of the verses graven
Upon his tombstone, whispering to myself:
He loved the Poets, and, if now alive,
Would have loved me, as one not destitute
Of promise, nor belying the kind hope
That he had formed, when I, at his command,
Began to spin, with toil, my earliest songs.

As I advanced, all that I saw or felt
Was gentleness and peace. Upon a small
And rocky island near, a fragment stood,
(Itself like a sea rock) the low remains
(With shells encrusted, dark with briny weeds)
Of a dilapidated structure, once
A Romish chapel, where the vested priest
Said matins at the hour that suited those
Who crossed the sands with ebb of morning tide.
Not far from that still ruin all the plain
Lay spotted with a variegated crowd
Of vehicles and travellers, horse and foot,
Wading beneath the conduct of their guide
In loose procession through the shallow stream
Of inland waters; the great sea meanwhile
Heaved at safe distance, far retired. I paused,
Longing for skill to paint a scene so bright
And cheerful, but the foremost of the band
As he approached, no salutation given
In the familiar language of the day,
Cried, "Robespierre is dead!" nor was a doubt,
After strict question, left within my mind
That he and his supporters all were fallen.

Great was my transport, deep my gratitude
To everlasting Justice, by this fiat

Made manifest. "Come now, ye golden times,"
Said I forth-pouring on those open sands
A hymn of triumph: "as the morning comes
From out the bosom of the night, come ye:
Thus far our trust is verified; behold!
They who with clumsy desperation brought
A river of Blood, and preached that nothing else
Could cleanse the Augean stable, by the might
Of their own helper have been swept away;
Their madness stands declared and visible;
Elsewhere will safety now be sought, and earth
March firmly towards righteousness and peace."—
Then schemes I framed more calmly, when and how
The madding factions might be tranquillised,
And how through hardships manifold and long
The glorious renovation would proceed.
Thus interrupted by uneasy bursts
Of exultation, I pursued my way
Along that very shore which I had skimmed
In former days, when—spurring from the Vale
Of Nightshade, and St. Mary's mouldering fane,
And the stone abbot, after circuit made
In wantonness of heart, a joyous band
Of schoolboys hastening to their distant home
Along the margin of the moonlight sea—
We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.

BOOK ELEVENTH

FRANCE (*concluded*)

FROM that time forth, Authority in France
Put on a milder face; Terror had ceased,
Yet everything was wanting that might give
Courage to them who looked for good by light
Of rational Experience, for the shoots
And hopeful blossoms of a second spring:
Yet, in me, confidence was unimpaired;
The Senate's language, and the public acts
And measures of the Government, though both
Weak, and of heartless omen, had not power
To daunt me; in the People was my trust:
And, in the virtues which mine eyes had seen,
I knew that wound external could not take
Life from the young Republic; that new foes
Would only follow, in the path of shame,
Their brethren, and her triumphs be in the end
Great, universal, irresistible.
This intuition led me to confound
One victory with another, higher far,—
Triumphs of unambitious peace at home,
And noiseless fortitude. Beholding still
Resistance strong as heretofore, I thought
That what was in degree the same was likewise
The same in quality,—that, as the worse
Of the two spirits then at strife remained
Untired, the better, surely, would preserve
The heart that first had roused him. Youth maintains,
In all conditions of society,
Communion more direct and intimate
With Nature,—hence, ofttimes, with reason too—
Than age or manhood, even. To Nature, then,
Power had reverted: habit, custom, law,
Had left an interregnum's open space
For *her* to move about in, uncontrolled.
Hence could I see how Babel-like their task,
Who, by the recent deluge stupified,
With their whole souls went culling from the day
Its petty promises, to build a tower
For their own safety; laughed with my compeers
At gravest heads, by enmity to France
Distempered, till they found, in every blast
Forced from the street-disturbing newsman's horn,
For her great cause record or prophecy
Of utter ruin. How might we believe
That wisdom could, in any shape, come near
Men clinging to delusions so insane?
And thus, experience proving that no few
Of our opinions had been just, we took
Like credit to ourselves where less was due,

And thought that other notions were as sound
Yea, could not but be right, because we saw
That foolish men opposed them.
To a strain
More animated I might here give way,
And tell, since juvenile errors are my theme,
What in those days, through Britain, was performed
To turn *all* judgments out of their right course;
But this is passion over-near ourselves,
Reality too close and too intense,
And intermixed with something, in my mind,
Of scorn and condemnation personal,
That would profane the sanctity of verse.
Our Shepherds, this say merely, at that time
Acted, or seemed at least to act, like men
Thirsting to make the guardian crook of law
A tool of murder; they who ruled the State—
Though with such awful proof before their eyes
That he, who would sow death, reaps death, or worse,
And can reap nothing better—child-like longed
To imitate, not wise enough to avoid;
Or left (by mere timidity betrayed)
The plain straight road, for one no better chosen
Than if their wish had been to undermine
Justice, and make an end of Liberty.

But from these bitter truths I must return
To my own history. It hath been told
That I was led to take an eager part
In arguments of civil polity,
Abruptly, and indeed before my time:
I had approached, like other youths, the shield
Of human nature from the golden side,
And would have fought, even to the death, to attest
The quality of the metal which I saw.
What there is best in individual man,
Of wise in passion, and sublime in power,
Benevolent in small societies,
And great in large ones, I had oft revolved,
Felt deeply, but not thoroughly understood
By reason: nay, far from it; they were yet,
As cause was given me afterwards to learn,
Not proof against the injuries of the day;
Lodged only at the sanctuary's door,
Not safe within its bosom. Thus prepared,
And with such general insight into evil,
And of the bounds which sever it from good,
As books and common intercourse with life
Must needs have given—to the inexperienced mind,
When the world travels in a beaten road,
Guide faithful as is needed—I began
To meditate with ardour on the rule
And management of nations; what it is
And ought to be; and strove to learn how far
Their power or weakness, wealth or poverty,
Their happiness or misery, depends
Upon their laws, and fashion of the State.

[1] O pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood
Upon our side, us who were strong in love!
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven! O times,
In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways
Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance!
When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights
When most intent on making of herself
A prime enchantress—to assist the work,
Which then was going forward in her name!
Not favoured spots alone, but the whole Earth,
The beauty wore of promise—that which sets
(As at some moments might not be unfelt
Among the bowers of Paradise itself)
The budding rose above the rose full blown.
What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt away!
They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
The play-fellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and strength
Their ministers,—who in lordly wise had stirred
Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found there
As if they had within some lurking right

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[1] See p. 234.

To wield it;—they, too, who of gentle mood
Had watched all gentle motions, and to these
Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild,
And in the region of their peaceful selves;—
Now was it that *both* found, the meek and lofty
Did both find, helpers to their hearts' desire,
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish,—
Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia,—subterranean fields,—
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us,—the place where, in the end,
We find our happiness, or not at all!

Why should I not confess that Earth was then
To me, what an inheritance, new-fallen,
Seems, when the first time visited, to one
Who thither comes to find in it his home?
He walks about and looks upon the spot
With cordial transport, moulds it and remoulds,
And is half-pleased with things that are amiss,
'Twill be such joy to see them disappear.

An active partisan, I thus convoked
From every object pleasant circumstance
To suit my ends; I moved among mankind
With genial feelings still predominant;
When erring, erring on the better part,
And in the kinder spirit; placable,
Indulgent, as not uninformed that men
See as they have been taught—Antiquity
Gives rights to error; and aware, no less
That throwing off oppression must be work
As well of License as of Liberty;
And above all—for this was more than all—
Not caring if the wind did now and then
Blow keen upon an eminence that gave
Prospect so large into futurity;
In brief, a child of Nature, as at first,
Diffusing only those affections wider
That from the cradle had grown up with me,
And losing, in no other way than light
Is lost in light, the weak in the more strong.

In the main outline, such it might be said
Was my condition, till with open war
Britain opposed the liberties of France.
This threw me first out of the pale of love;
Soured and corrupted, upwards to the source,
My sentiments; was not, as hitherto,
A swallowing up of lesser things in great,
But change of them into their contraries;
And thus a way was opened for mistakes
And false conclusions, in degree as gross,
In kind more dangerous. What had been a pride,
Was now a shame; my likings and my loves
Ran in new channels, leaving old ones dry;
And hence a blow that, in maturer age,
Would but have touched the judgment, struck more deep
Into sensations near the heart: meantime,
As from the first, wild theories were afloat,
To whose pretensions, sedulously urged,
I had but lent a careless ear, assured
That time was ready to set all things right,
And that the multitude, so long oppressed,
Would be oppressed no more.
But when events
Brought less encouragement, and unto these
The immediate proof of principles no more
Could be entrusted, while the events themselves,
Worn out in greatness, stripped of novelty,
Less occupied the mind, and sentiments
Could through my understanding's natural growth
No longer keep their ground, by faith maintained
Of inward consciousness, and hope that laid
Her hand upon her object—evidence
Safer, of universal application, such
As could not be impeached, was sought elsewhere.

But now, become oppressors in their turn,
Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence
For one of conquest, losing sight of all
Which they had struggled for: up mounted now,
Openly in the eye of earth and heaven,
The scale of liberty. I read her doom,

With anger vexed, with disappointment sore,
But not dismayed, nor taking to the shame
Of a false prophet. While resentment rose
Striving to hide, what nought could heal, the wounds
Of mortified presumption, I adhered
More firmly to old tenets, and, to prove
Their temper, strained them more; and thus, in heat
Of contest, did opinions every day
Grow into consequence, till round my mind
They clung, as if they were its life, nay more,
The very being of the immortal soul.

This was the time, when, all things tending fast
To depravation, speculative schemes—
That promised to abstract the hopes of Man
Out of his feelings, to be fixed thenceforth
For ever in a purer element—
Found ready welcome. Tempting region *that*
For Zeal to enter and refresh herself,
Where passions had the privilege to work,
And never hear the sound of their own names.
But, speaking more in charity, the dream
Flattered the young, pleased with extremes, nor least
With that which makes our Reason's naked self
The object of its fervour. What delight!
How glorious! in self-knowledge and self-rule,
To look through all the frailties of the world,
And, with a resolute mastery shaking off
Infirmities of nature, time, and place,
Build social upon personal Liberty,
Which, to the blind restraints of general laws,
Superior, magisterially adopts
One guide, the light of circumstances, flashed
Upon an independent intellect.
Thus expectation rose again; thus hope,
From her first ground expelled, grew proud once more.
Oft, as my thoughts were turned to human kind,
I scorned indifference; but, inflamed with thirst
Of a secure intelligence, and sick
Of other longing, I pursued what seemed
A more exalted nature; wished that Man
Should start out of his earthy, worm-like state,
And spread abroad the wings of Liberty,
Lord of himself, in undisturbed delight—
A noble aspiration! *yet* I feel
(Sustained by worthier as by wiser thoughts)
The aspiration, nor shall ever cease
To feel it;—but return we to our course.

Enough, 'tis true—could such a plea excuse
Those aberrations—had the clamorous friends
Of ancient Institutions said and done
To bring disgrace upon their very names;
Disgrace, of which, custom and written law,
And sundry moral sentiments as props
Or emanations of those institutes,
Too justly bore a part. A veil had been
Uplifted; why deceive ourselves? in sooth,
'Twas even so; and sorrow for the man
Who either had not eyes wherewith to see,
Or, seeing, had forgotten! A strong shock
Was given to old opinions; all men's minds
Had felt its power, and mine was both let loose,
Let loose and goaded. After what hath been
Already said of patriotic love,
Suffice it here to add, that, somewhat stern
In temperament, withal a happy man,
And therefore bold to look on painful things,
Free likewise of the world, and thence more bold,
I summoned my best skill, and toiled, intent
To anatomise the frame of social life;
Yea, the whole body of society
Searched to its heart. Share with me, Friend! the wish
That some dramatic tale, endued with shapes
Livelier, and flinging out less guarded words
Than suit the work we fashion, might set forth

What then I learned, or think I learned, of truth,
And the errors into which I fell, betrayed
By present objects, and by reasonings false
From their beginnings, inasmuch as drawn
Out of a heart that had been turned aside
From Nature's way by outward accidents,
And which was thus confounded, more and more
Misguided, and misguiding. So I fared,
Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims, creeds,
Like culprits to the bar; calling the mind,
Suspiciously, to establish in plain day
Her titles and her honours; now believing,
Now disbelieving; endlessly perplexed
With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground
Of obligation, what the rule and whence
The sanction; till, demanding formal *proof*,
And seeking it in every thing, I lost
All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
Yielded up moral questions in despair.

This was the crisis of that strong disease,
This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I drooped,
Deeming our blessèd reason of least use
Where wanted most: "The lordly attributes
Of will and choice," I bitterly exclaimed
"What are they but a mockery of a Being
Who hath in no concerns of his a test
Of good and evil; knows not what to fear
Or hope for, what to covet or to shun;
And who, if those could be discerned, would yet
Be little profited, would see, and ask
Where is the obligation to enforce?
And, to acknowledged law rebellious, still,
As selfish passion urged, would act amiss;
The dupe of folly, or the slave of crime."

Depressed, bewildered thus, I did not walk
With scoffers, seeking light and gay revenge
From indiscriminate laughter, nor sate down
In reconcilement with an utter waste
Of intellect; such sloth I could not brook,
(Too well I loved, in that my spring of life,
Pains-taking thoughts, and truth, their dear reward)
But turned to abstract science, and there sought
Work for the reasoning faculty enthroned
Where the disturbances of space and time—
Whether in matters various, properties
Inherent, or from human will and power
Derived—find no admission. Then it was—
Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good!—
That the belovèd Sister in whose sight
Those days were passed, now speaking in a voice
Of sudden admonition—like a brook
That did but *cross* a lonely road, and now
Is seen, heard, felt, and caught at every turn,
Companion never lost through many a league—
Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self; for, though bedimmed and changed
Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
Than as a clouded and a waning moon:
She whispered still that brightness would return;
She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth;
And, lastly, as hereafter will be shown,
If willing audience fail not, Nature's self,
By all varieties of human love
Assisted, led me back through opening day
To those sweet counsels between head and heart
Whence grew that genuine knowledge, fraught with peace,
Which, through the later sinkings of this cause,
Hath still upheld me, and upholds me now
In the catastrophe (for so they dream,
And nothing less), when, finally to close
And seal up all the gains of France, a Pope
Is summoned in, to crown an Emperor—
This last opprobrium, when we see a people,
That once looked up in faith, as if to Heaven
For manna, take a lesson from the dog
Returning to his vomit; when the sun
That rose in splendour, was alive, and moved
In exultation with a living pomp
Of clouds—his glory's natural retinue—

Hath dropped all functions by the gods bestowed,
And, turned into a gewgaw, a machine,
Sets like an Opera phantom.
Thus, O Friend!
Through times of honour and through times of shame
Descending, have I faithfully retraced
The perturbations of a youthful mind
Under a long-lived storm of great events—
A story destined for thy ear, who now,
Among the fallen of nations, dost abide
Where Etna, over hill and valley, casts
His shadow stretching towards Syracuse,
The city of Timoleon! Righteous Heaven!
How are the mighty prostrated! They first,
They first of all that breathe should have awaked
When the great voice was heard from out the tombs
Of ancient heroes. If I suffered grief
For ill-requited France, by many deemed
A trifler only in her proudest day;
Have been distressed to think of what she once
Promised, now is; a far more sober cause
Thine eyes must see of sorrow in a land,
To the reanimating influence lost
Of memory, to virtue lost and hope,
Though with the wreck of loftier years bestrewn.

But indignation works where hope is not,
And thou, O Friend! wilt be refreshed. There is
One great society alone on earth:
The noble Living and the noble Dead.

Thine be such converse strong and sanative,
A ladder for thy spirit to reascend
To health and joy and pure contentedness;
To me the grief confined, that thou art gone
From this last spot of earth, where Freedom now
Stands single in her only sanctuary;
A lonely wanderer, art gone, by pain
Compelled and sickness, at this latter day,
This sorrowful reverse for all mankind.
I feel for thee, must utter what I feel:
The sympathies erewhile in part discharged,
Gather afresh, and will have vent again:
My own delights do scarcely seem to me
My own delights; the lordly Alps themselves,
Those rosy peaks, from which the Morning looks
Abroad on many nations, are no more
For me that image of pure gladsomeness
Which they were wont to be. Through kindred scenes,
For purpose, at a time, how different!
Thou tak'st thy way, carrying the heart and soul
That Nature gives to Poets, now by thought
Matured, and in the summer of their strength.
Oh! wrap him in your shades, ye giant woods,
On Etna's side; and thou, O flowery field
Of Enna! is there not some nook of thine,
From the first play-time of the infant world
Kept sacred to restorative delight,
When from afar invoked by anxious love?

Child of the mountains, among shepherds reared,
Ere yet familiar with the classic page,
I learnt to dream of Sicily; and lo,
The gloom, that, but a moment past, was deepened
At thy command, at her command gives way;
A pleasant promise, wafted from her shores,
Comes o'er my heart: in fancy I behold
Her seas yet smiling, her once happy vales;
Nor can my tongue give utterance to a name
Of note belonging to that honoured isle,
Philosopher or Bard, Empedocles,
Or Archimedes, pure abstracted soul!
That doth not yield a solace to my grief:
And, O Theocritus,[1] so far have some
Prevailed among the powers of heaven and earth,
By their endowments, good or great, that they
Have had, as thou reportest, miracles
Wrought for them in old time: yea, not unmoved,
When thinking on my own beloved friend,
I hear thee tell how bees with honey fed
Divine Comates, by his impious lord
Within a chest imprisoned; how they came
Laden from blooming grove or flowery field,
And fed him there, alive, month after month,

[1] *Theocrit. Idyll.* vii. 78.

Because the goatherd, blessèd man! had lips
Wet with the Muses' nectar.
Thus I soothe
The pensive moments by this calm fire-side,
And find a thousand bounteous images
To cheer the thoughts of those I love, and mine.
Our prayers have been accepted; thou wilt stand
On Etna's summit, above earth and sea,
Triumphant, winning from the invaded heavens
Thoughts without bound, magnificent designs,
Worthy of poets who attuned their harps
In wood or echoing cave, for discipline
Of heroes; or, in reverence to the gods,
'Mid temples, served by sapient priests, and choirs
Of virgins crowned with roses. Not in vain
Those temples, where they in their ruins yet
Survive for inspiration, shall attract
Thy solitary steps: and on the brink
Thou wilt recline of pastoral Arethuse;
Or, if that fountain be in truth no more,
Then, near some other spring—which, by the name
Thou gratulatest, willingly deceived—
I see thee linger a glad votary,
And not a captive pining for his home.

Book Twelfth

IMAGINATION AND TASTE, HOW IMPAIRED AND RESTORED

Long time have human ignorance and guilt
Detained us, on what spectacles of woe
Compelled to look, and inwardly oppressed
With sorrow, disappointment, vexing thoughts,
Confusion of the judgment, zeal decayed,
And, lastly, utter loss of hope itself
And things to hope for! Not with these began
Our song, and not with these our song must end.
Ye motions of delight, that haunt the sides
Of the green hills; ye breezes and soft airs,
Whose subtle intercourse with breathing flowers,
Feelingly watched, might teach Man's haughty race
How without injury to take, to give
Without offence; ye who, as if to show
The wondrous influence of power gently used,
Bend the complying heads of lordly pines,
And, with a touch, shift the stupendous clouds
Through the whole compass of the sky; ye brooks,
Muttering along the stones, a busy noise
By day, a quiet sound in silent night;
Ye waves, that out of the great deep steal forth
In a calm hour to kiss the pebbly shore,
Not mute, and then retire, fearing no storm;
And you, ye groves, whose ministry it is
To interpose the covert of your shades,
Even as a sleep, between the heart of man
And outward troubles, between man himself,
Not seldom, and his own uneasy heart:
Oh! that I had a music and a voice
Harmonious as your own, that I might tell
What ye have done for me. The morning shines,
Nor heedeth Man's perverseness; Spring returns,—
I saw the Spring return, and could rejoice,
In common with the children of her love,
Piping on boughs, or sporting on fresh fields,
Or boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven
On wings that navigate cerulean skies.
So neither were complacency, nor peace,
Nor tender yearnings, wanting for my good
Through these distracted times; in Nature still
Glorying, I found a counterpoise in her,
Which, when the spirit of evil reached its height,
Maintained for me a secret happiness.

This narrative, my Friend! hath chiefly told
Of intellectual power, fostering love,
Dispensing truth, and, over men and things,
Where reason yet might hesitate, diffusing
Prophetic sympathies of genial faith:
So was I favoured—such my happy lot—
Until that natural graciousness of mind
Gave way to overpressure from the times
And their disastrous issues. What availed,
When spells forbade the voyager to land,
That fragrant notice of a pleasant shore

Wafted, at intervals, from many a bower
Of blissful gratitude and fearless love?
Dare I avow that wish was mine to see,
And hope that future times *would* surely see,
The man to come, parted, as by a gulph,
From him who had been; that I could no more
Trust the elevation which had made me one
With the great family that still survives
To illuminate the abyss of ages past,
Sage, warrior, patriot, hero; for it seemed
That their best virtues were not free from taint
Of something false and weak, that could not stand
The open eye of Reason. Then I said,
"Go to the Poets, they will speak to thee
More perfectly of purer creatures;—yet
If reason be nobility in man,
Can aught be more ignoble than the man
Whom they delight in, blinded as he is
By prejudice, the miserable slave
Of low ambition or distempered love?"

In such strange passion, if I may once more
Review the past, I warred against myself—
A bigot to a new idolatry—
Like a cowled monk who hath forsworn the world,
Zealously laboured to cut off my heart
From all the sources of her former strength;
And as, by simple waving of a wand,
The wizard instantaneously dissolves
Palace or grove, even so could I unsoul
As readily by syllogistic words
Those mysteries of being which have made,
And shall continue evermore to make,
Of the whole human race one brotherhood.

What wonder, then, if, to a mind so far
Perverted, even the visible Universe
Fell under the dominion of a taste
Less spiritual, with microscopic view
Was scanned, as I had scanned the moral world?

O Soul of Nature! excellent and fair!
That didst rejoice with me, with whom I, too,
Rejoiced through early youth, before the winds
And roaring waters, and in lights and shades
That marched and countermarched about the hills
In glorious apparition, Powers on whom
I daily waited, now all eye and now
All ear; but never long without the heart
Employed, and man's unfolding intellect:
O Soul of Nature! that, by laws divine
Sustained and governed, still dost overflow
With an impassioned life, what feeble ones
Walk on this earth! how feeble have I been
When thou wert in thy strength! Nor this through stroke
Of human suffering, such as justifies
Remissness and inaptitude of mind,
But through presumption; even in pleasure pleased
Unworthily, disliking here, and there
Liking; by rules of mimic art transferred
To things above all art; but more,—for this,
Although a strong infection of the age,
Was never much my habit—giving way
To a comparison of scene with scene,
Bent overmuch on superficial things,
Pampering myself with meagre novelties
Of colour and proportion; to the moods
Of time and season, to the moral power,
The affections and the spirit of the place,
Insensible. Nor only did the love
Of sitting thus in judgment interrupt
My deeper feelings, but another cause,
More subtle and less easily explained,
That almost seems inherent in the creature,
A twofold frame of body and of mind.
I speak in recollection of a time
When the bodily eye, in every stage of life
The most despotic of our senses, gained
Such strength in *me* as often held my mind
In absolute dominion. Gladly here,
Entering upon abstruser argument,
Could I endeavour to unfold the means
Which Nature studiously employs to thwart
This tyranny, summons all the senses each
To counteract the other, and themselves,
And makes them all, and the objects with which all
Are conversant, subservient in their turn
To the great ends of Liberty and Power.
But leave we this: enough that my delights
(Such as they were) were sought insatiably.
Vivid the transport, vivid though not profound;

I roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock,
Still craving combinations of new forms,
New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,
Proud of her own endowments, and rejoiced
To lay the inner faculties asleep.
Amid the turns and counterturns, the strife
And various trials of our complex being,
As we grow up, such thraldom of that sense
Seems hard to shun. And yet I knew a maid,
A young enthusiast, who escaped these bonds;
Her eye was not the mistress of her heart;
Far less did rules prescribed by passive taste,
Or barren intermeddling subtleties,
Perplex her mind; but, wise as women are
When genial circumstance hath favoured them,
She welcomed what was given, and craved no more;
Whate'er the scene presented to her view
That was the best, to that she was attuned
By her benign simplicity of life,
And through a perfect happiness of soul,
Whose variegated feelings were in this
Sisters, that they were each some new delight.
Birds in the bower, and lambs in the green field,
Could they have known her, would have loved; methought
Her very presence such a sweetness breathed,
That flowers, and trees, and even the silent hills,
And everything she looked on, should have had
An intimation how she bore herself
Towards them and to all creatures. God delights
In such a being; for, her common thoughts
Are piety, her life is gratitude.

Even like this maid, before I was called forth
From the retirement of my native hills,
I loved whate'er I saw: nor lightly loved,
But most intensely; never dreamt of aught
More grand, more fair, more exquisitely framed
Than those few nooks to which my happy feet
Were limited. I had not at that time
Lived long enough, nor in the least survived
The first diviner influence of this world,
As it appears to unaccustomed eyes.
Worshipping them among the depth of things,
As piety ordained, could I submit
To measured admiration, or to aught
That should preclude humility and love?
I felt, observed, and pondered; did not judge,
Yea, never thought of judging; with the gift
Of all this glory filled and satisfied.
And afterwards, when through the gorgeous Alps
Roaming, I carried with me the same heart:
In truth, the degradation—howsoe'er
Induced, effect, in whatsoe'er degree,
Of custom that prepares a partial scale
In which the little oft outweighs the great;
Or any other cause that hath been named;
Or lastly, aggravated by the times
And their impassioned sounds, which well might make
The milder minstrelsies of rural scenes
Inaudible—was transient; I had known
Too forcibly, too early in my life,
Visitings of imaginative power
For this to last: I shook the habit off
Entirely and for ever, and again
In Nature's presence stood, as now I stand,
A sensitive being, a *creative* soul.

There are in our existence spots of time,
That with distinct pre-eminence retain
A renovating virtue, whence—depressed
By false opinion and contentious thought,
Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse—our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired;
A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
That penetrates, enables us to mount,
When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
Among those passages of life that give
Profoundest knowledge to what point, and how,
The mind is lord and master—outward sense

The obedient servant of her will. Such moments
Are scattered everywhere, taking their date
From our first childhood. I remember well,
That once, while yet my inexperienced hand
Could scarcely hold a bridle, with proud hopes
I mounted, and we journeyed towards the hills :
An ancient servant of my father's house
Was with me, my encourager and guide :
We had not travelled long, ere some mischance
Disjoined me from my comrade ; and, through fear
Dismounting, down the rough and stony moor
I led my horse, and, stumbling on, at length
Came to a bottom, where in former times
A murderer had been hung in iron chains.
The gibbet-mast had mouldered down, the bones
And iron case were gone ; but on the turf,
Hard by, soon after that fell deed was wrought,
Some unknown hand had carved the murderer's name.
The monumental letters were inscribed
In times long past ; but still, from year to year
By superstition of the neighbourhood,
The grass is cleared away, and to this hour
The characters are fresh and visible :
A casual glance had shown them, and I fled,
Faltering and faint, and ignorant of the road :
Then, reascending the bare common, saw
A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,
The beacon on the summit, and, more near,
A girl, who bore a pitcher on her head,
And seemed with difficult steps to force her way
Against the blowing wind. It was, in truth,
An ordinary sight ; but I should need
Colours and words that are unknown to man,
To paint the visionary dreariness
Which, while I looked all round for my lost guide,
Invested moorland waste and naked pool,
The beacon crowning the lone eminence,
The female and her garments vexed and tossed
By the strong wind. When, in the blessèd hours
Of early love, the loved one at my side,
I roamed, in daily presence of this scene,
Upon the naked pool and dreary crags,
And on the melancholy beacon, fell
A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam ;
And think ye not with radiance more sublime
For these remembrances, and for the power
They had left behind ? So feeling comes in aid
Of feeling, and diversity of strength
Attends us, if but once we have been strong.
Oh ! mystery of man, from what a depth
Proceed thy honours. I am lost, but see
In simple childhood something of the base
On which thy greatness stands ; but this I feel,
That from thyself it comes, that thou must give,
Else never canst receive. The days gone by
Return upon me almost from the dawn
Of life : the hiding-places of man's power
Open ; I would approach them, but they close.
I see by glimpses now ; when age comes on,
May scarcely see at all ; and I would give,
While yet we may, as far as words can give,
Substance and life to what I feel, enshrining,
Such is my hope, the spirit of the Past
For future restoration.—Yet another
Of these memorials :—
                                        One Christmas-time,
On the glad eve of its dear holidays,
Feverish, and tired, and restless, I went forth
Into the fields, impatient for the sight
Of those led palfreys that should bear us home ;
My brothers and myself. There rose a crag,
That, from the meeting-point of two highways
Ascending, overlooked them both, far stretched ;

Thither, uncertain on which road to fix
My expectation, thither I repaired,
Scout-like, and gained the summit; 'twas a day
Tempestuous, dark, and wild, and on the grass
I sate half-sheltered by a naked wall;
Upon my right hand couched a single sheep,
Upon my left a blasted hawthorn stood;
With those companions at my side, I watched,
Straining my eyes intensely, as the mist
Gave intermitting prospect of the copse
And plain beneath. Ere we to school returned,—
That dreary time,—ere we had been ten days
Sojourners in my father's house, he died;
And I and my three brothers, orphans then,
Followed his body to the grave. The event,
With all the sorrow that it brought, appeared
A chastisement; and when I called to mind
That day so lately past, when from the crag
I looked in such anxiety of hope;
With trite reflections of morality,
Yet in the deepest passion, I bowed low
To God, Who thus corrected my desires;
And, afterwards, the wind and sleety rain,
And all the business of the elements,
The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,
And the bleak music from that old stone wall,
The noise of wood and water, and the mist
That on the line of each of those two roads
Advanced in such indisputable shapes;
All these were kindred spectacles and sounds
To which I oft repaired, and thence would drink,
As at a fountain; and on winter nights,
Down to this very time, when storm and rain
Beat on my roof, or, haply, at noon-day,
While in a grove I walk, whose lofty trees,
Laden with summer's thickest foliage, rock
In a strong wind, some working of the spirit,
Some inward agitations thence are brought,
Whate'er their office, whether to beguile
Thoughts over busy in the course they took,
Or animate an hour of vacant ease.

Book Thirteenth

IMAGINATION AND TASTE, HOW IMPAIRED AND RESTORED (*concluded*)

From Nature doth emotion come, and moods
Of calmness equally are Nature's gift:
This is her glory; these two attributes
Are sister horns that constitute her strength.
Hence Genius, born to thrive by interchange
Of peace and excitation, finds in her
His best and purest friend; from her receives
That energy by which he seeks the truth,
From her that happy stillness of the mind
Which fits him to receive it when unsought.

Such benefit the humblest intellects
Partake of, each in their degree; 'tis mine
To speak, what I myself have known and felt;
Smooth task! for words find easy way, inspired
By gratitude, and confidence in truth.
Long time in search of knowledge did I range
The field of human life, in heart and mind
Benighted; but, the dawn beginning now
To re-appear, 'twas proved that not in vain
I had been taught to reverence a Power
That is the visible quality and shape
And image of right reason; that matures
Her processes by steadfast laws; gives birth
To no impatient or fallacious hopes,
No heat of passion or excessive zeal,
No vain conceits; provokes to no quick turns
Of self-applauding intellect; but trains
To meekness, and exalts by humble faith;
Holds up before the mind intoxicate
With present objects, and the busy dance
Of things that pass away, a temperate show
Of objects that endure; and by this course
Disposes her, when over-fondly set
On throwing off incumbrances, to seek
In man, and in the frame of social life,
Whate'er there is desirable and good
Of kindred permanence, unchanged in form
And function, or, through strict vicissitude
Of life and death, revolving. Above all
Were re-established now those watchful thoughts

Which, seeing little worthy or sublime
In what the Historian's pen so much delights
To blazon—power and energy detached
From moral purpose—early tutored me
To look with feelings of fraternal love
Upon the unassuming things that hold
A silent station in this beauteous world.

Thus moderated, thus composed, I found
Once more in Man an object of delight,
Of pure imagination, and of love;
And, as the horizon of my mind enlarged,
Again I took the intellectual eye
For my instructor, studious more to see
Great truths, than touch and handle little ones.
Knowledge was given accordingly; my trust
Became more firm in feelings that had stood
The test of such a trial; clearer far
My sense of excellence—of right and wrong:
The promise of the present time retired
Into its true proportion; sanguine schemes,
Ambitious projects, pleased me less; I sought
For present good in life's familiar face,
And built thereon my hopes of good to come.

With settling judgments now of what would last
And what would disappear; prepared to find
Presumption, folly, madness, in the men
Who thrust themselves upon the passive world
As Rulers of the world; to see in these,
Even when the public welfare is their aim,
Plans without thought, or built on theories
Vague and unsound; and having brought the books
Of modern statists to their proper test,
Life, human life, with all its sacred claims
Of sex and age, and heaven-descended rights,
Mortal, or those beyond the reach of death;
And having thus discerned how dire a thing
Is worshipped in that idol proudly named
"The Wealth of Nations," *where* alone that wealth
Is lodged, and how increased; and having gained
A more judicious knowledge of the worth
And dignity of individual man,
No composition of the brain, but man
Of whom we read, the man whom we behold
With our own eyes—I could not but inquire—
Not with less interest than heretofore,
But greater, though in spirit more subdued—
Why is this glorious creature to be found
One only in ten thousand? What one is,
Why may not millions be? What bars are thrown
By Nature in the way of such a hope?
Our animal appetites and daily wants,
Are these obstructions insurmountable?
If not, then others vanish into air.
"Inspect the basis of the social pile:
Inquire," said I, "how much of mental power
And genuine virtue they possess who live
By bodily toil, labour exceeding far
Their due proportion, under all the weight
Of that injustice which upon ourselves
Ourselves entail." Such estimate to frame
I chiefly looked (what need to look beyond?)
Among the natural abodes of men,
Fields with their rural works; recalled to mind
My earliest notices; with these compared
The observations made in later youth,
And to that day continued.—For, the time
Had never been when throes of mighty Nations
And the world's tumult unto me could yield,
How far soe'er transported and possessed,
Full measure of content; but still I craved
An intermingling of distinct regards
And truths of individual sympathy
Nearer ourselves. Such often might be gleaned
From the great City, else it must have proved
To me a heart-depressing wilderness;
But much was wanting: therefore did I turn
To you, ye pathways, and ye lonely roads;
Sought you enriched with everything I prized,
With human kindnesses and simple joys.

Oh! next to one dear state of bliss, vouchsafed,

Alas! to few in this untoward world,
The bliss of walking daily in life's prime
Through field or forest with the maid we love,
While yet our hearts are young, while yet we breathe
Nothing but happiness, in some lone nook,
Deep vale, or anywhere, the home of both,
From which it would be misery to stir:
Oh! next to such enjoyment of our youth,
In my esteem, next to such dear delight,
Was that of wandering on from day to day
Where I could meditate in peace, and cull
Knowledge that step by step might lead me on
To wisdom; or, as lightsome as a bird
Wafted upon the wind from distant lands,
Sing notes of greeting to strange fields or groves,
Which lacked not voice to welcome me in turn:
And, when that pleasant toil had ceased to please,
Converse with men, where if we meet a face
We almost meet a friend, on naked heaths
With long long ways before, by cottage bench,
Or well-spring where the weary traveller rests.

Who doth not love to follow with his eye
The windings of a public way? the sight,
Familiar object as it is, hath wrought
On my imagination since the morn
Of childhood, when a disappearing line,
One daily present to my eyes, that crossed
The naked summit of a far-off hill
Beyond the limits that my feet had trod,
Was like an invitation into space
Boundless, or guide into eternity.
Yes, something of the grandeur which invests
The mariner, who sails the roaring sea
Through storm and darkness, early in my mind
Surrounded, too, the wanderers of the earth;
Grandeur as much, and loveliness far more.
Awed have I been by strolling Bedlamites;
From many other uncouth vagrants (passed
In fear) have walked with quicker step; but why
Take note of this? When I began to enquire,
To watch and question those I met, and speak
Without reserve to them, the lonely roads
Were open schools in which I daily read
With most delight the passions of mankind,
Whether by words, looks, sighs, or tears, revealed;
There saw into the depth of human souls,
Souls that appear to have no depth at all
To careless eyes. And—now convinced at heart
How little those formalities, to which
With overweening trust alone we give
The name of Education, have to do
With real feeling and just sense; how vain
A correspondence with the talking world
Proves to the most; and called to make good search
If man's estate, by doom of Nature yoked
With toil, be therefore yoked with ignorance;
If virtue be indeed so hard to rear,
And intellectual strength so rare a boon—
I prized such walks still more, for there I found
Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace
And steadiness, and healing and repose
To every angry passion. There I heard,
From mouths of men obscure and lowly, truths
Replete with honour; sounds in unison
With loftiest promises of good and fair.

There are who think that strong affection, love
Known by whatever name, is falsely deemed
A gift, to use a term which they would use,
Of vulgar nature; that its growth requires
Retirement, leisure, language purified
By manners studied and elaborate;
That whoso feels such passion in its strength
Must live within the very light and air
Of courteous usages refined by art.
True is it, where oppression worse than death
Salutes the being at his birth, where grace
Of culture hath been utterly unknown,
And poverty and labour in excess
From day to day pre-occupy the ground
Of the affections, and to Nature's self
Oppose a deeper nature; there, indeed,
Love cannot be; nor does it thrive with ease
Among the close and overcrowded haunts

Of cities, where the human heart is sick,
And the eye feeds it not, and cannot feed.
—Yes, in those wanderings deeply did I feel
How we mislead each other; above all,
How books mislead us, seeking their reward
From judgments of the wealthy Few, who see
By artificial lights; how they debase
The Many for the pleasure of those Few;
Effeminately level down the truth
To certain general notions, for the sake
Of being understood at once, or else
Through want of better knowledge in the heads
That framed them; flattering self-conceit with words,
That, while they most ambitiously set forth
Extrinsic differences, the outward marks
Whereby society has parted man
From man, neglect the universal heart.

Here, calling up to mind what then I saw,
A youthful traveller, and see daily now
In the familiar circuit of my home,
Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
To Nature, and the power of human minds,
To men as they are men within themselves.
How oft high service is performed within,
When all the external man is rude in show,—
Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
But a mere mountain chapel, that protects
Its simple worshippers from sun and shower.
Of these, said I, shall be my song; of these,
If future years mature me for the task,
Will I record the praises, making verse
Deal boldly with substantial things; in truth
And sanctity of passion, speak of these,
That justice may be done, obeisance paid
Where it is due: thus haply shall I teach,
Inspire; through unadulterated ears
Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope,—my theme
No other than the very heart of man,
As found among the best of those who live—
Not unexalted by religious faith,
Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few—
In Nature's presence: thence may I select
Sorrow, that is not sorrow, but delight;
And miserable love, that is not pain
To hear of, for the glory that redounds
Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.
Be mine to follow with no timid step
Where knowledge leads me: it shall be my pride
That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
Speaking no dream, but things oracular;
Matter not lightly to be heard by those
Who to the letter of the outward promise
Do read the invisible soul; by men adroit
In speech, and for communion with the world
Accomplished; minds whose faculties are then
Most active when they are most eloquent,
And elevated most when most admired.
Men may be found of other mould than these,
Who are their own upholders, to themselves
Encouragement, and energy, and will,
Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
As native passion dictates. Others, too,
There are among the walks of homely life
Still higher, men for contemplation framed,
Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase;
Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse:
Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
The thought, the image, and the silent joy:
Words are but under-agents in their souls;
When they are grasping with their greatest strength,
They do not breathe among them: this I speak
In gratitude to God, Who feeds our hearts
For His own service; knoweth, loveth us,
When we are unregarded by the world.

Also, about this time did I receive
Convictions still more strong than heretofore,
Not only that the inner frame is good,
And graciously composed, but that, no less,
Nature for all conditions wants not power
To consecrate, if we have eyes to see,
The outside of her creatures, and to breathe
Grandeur upon the very humblest face
Of human life. I felt that the array
Of act and circumstance, and visible form,
Is mainly to the pleasure of the mind

What passion makes them; that meanwhile the forms
Of Nature have a passion in themselves,
That intermingles with those works of man
To which she summons him; although the works
Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own;
And that the Genius of the Poet hence
May boldly take his way among mankind
Wherever Nature leads; that he hath stood
By Nature's side among the men of old,
And so shall stand for ever. Dearest Friend!
If thou partake the animating faith
That Poets, even as Prophets, each with each
Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
Have each his own peculiar faculty,
Heaven's gift, a sense that fits him to perceive
Objects unseen before, thou wilt not blame
The humblest of this band who dares to hope
That unto him hath also been vouchsafed
An insight that in some sort he possesses,
A privilege whereby a work of his,
Proceeding from a source of untaught things,
Creative and enduring, may become
A power like one of Nature's. To a hope
Not less ambitious once among the wilds
Of Sarum's Plain, my youthful spirit was raised;
There, as I ranged at will the pastoral downs
Trackless and smooth, or paced the bare white roads
Lengthening in solitude their dreary line,
Time with his retinue of ages fled
Backwards, nor checked his flight until I saw
Our dim ancestral Past in vision clear;
Saw multitudes of men, and, here and there,
A single Briton clothed in wolf-skin vest,
With shield and stone-axe, stride across the wold;
The voice of spears was heard, the rattling spear
Shaken by arms of mighty bone, in strength,
Long mouldered, of barbaric majesty.
I called on Darkness—but before the word
Was uttered, midnight darkness seemed to take
All objects from my sight; and lo! again
The Desert visible by dismal flames;
It is the sacrificial altar, fed
With living men—how deep the groans! the voice
Of those that crowd the giant wicker thrills
The monumental hillocks, and the pomp
Is for both worlds, the living and the dead.
At other moments—(for through that wide waste
Three summer days I roamed) where'er the Plain
Was figured o'er with circles, lines, or mounds,
That yet survive, a work, as some divine,
Shaped by the Druids, so to represent
Their knowledge of the heavens, and image forth
The constellations—gently was I charmed
Into a waking dream, a reverie
That, with believing eyes, where'er I turned,
Beheld long-bearded teachers, with white wands
Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky,
Alternately, and plain below, while breath
Of music swayed their motions, and the waste
Rejoiced with them and me in those sweet sounds.

This for the past, and things that may be viewed
Or fancied in the obscurity of years
From monumental hints: and thou, O Friend!
Pleased with some unpremeditated strains
That served those wanderings to beguile, hast said
That then and there my mind had exercised
Upon the vulgar forms of present things,
The actual world of our familiar days,
Yet higher power; had caught from them a tone,
An image, and a character, by books
Not hitherto reflected. Call we this
A partial judgment—and yet why? for *then*
We were as strangers; and I may not speak
Thus wrongfully of verse, however rude,
Which on thy young imagination, trained
In the great City, broke like light from far

Moreover, each man's Mind is to herself
Witness and judge; and I remember well
That in life's every-day appearances
I seemed about this time to gain clear sight
Of a new world—a world, too, that was fit
To be transmitted, and to other eyes
Made visible; as ruled by those fixed laws
Whence spiritual dignity originates,
Which do both give it being and maintain
A balance, an ennobling interchange
Of action from without and from within;
The excellence, pure function, and best power
Both of the objects seen, and eye that sees.

Book Fourteenth

CONCLUSION

In one of those excursions (may they ne'er
Fade from remembrance!) through the Northern tracts
Of Cambria ranging with a youthful friend,
I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,
And westward took my way, to see the sun
Rise, from the top of Snowdon. To the door
Of a rude cottage at the mountain's base
We came, and roused the shepherd who attends
The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty guide;
Then, cheered by short refreshment, sallied forth.

It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,
Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog
Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;
But, undiscouraged, we began to climb
The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us round,
And, after ordinary travellers' talk
With our conductor, pensively we sank
Each into commerce with his private thoughts:
Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself
Was nothing either seen or heard that checked
Those musings or diverted, save that once
The shepherd's lurcher, who, among the crags,
Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog, teased
His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent.
This small adventure, for even such it seemed
In that wild place and at the dead of night,
Being over and forgotten, on we wound
In silence as before. With forehead bent
Earthward, as if in opposition set
Against an enemy, I panted up
With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.
Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,
Ascending at loose distance each from each,
And I, as chanced, the foremost of the band;
When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
And with a step or two seemed brighter still;
Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,
For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up,
The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still ocean; and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.
Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment none
Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars
Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
All meek and silent, save that through a rift—
Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place—
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams

Innumerable, roaring with one voice!
Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.

When into air had partially dissolved
That vision, given to spirits of the night
And three chance human wanderers, in calm thought
Reflected, it appeared to me the type
Of a majestic intellect, its acts
And its possessions, what it has and craves,
What in itself it is, and would become.
There I beheld the emblem of a mind
That feeds upon infinity, that broods
Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
Its voices issuing forth to silent light
In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
By recognitions of transcendent power,
In sense conducting to ideal form,
In soul of more than mortal privilege.
One function, above all, of such a mind
Had Nature shadowed there, by putting forth,
'Mid circumstances awful and sublime,
That mutual domination which she loves
To exert upon the face of outward things,
So moulded, joined, abstracted, so endowed
With interchangeable supremacy,
That men, least sensitive, see, hear, perceive,
And cannot choose but feel. The power, which all
Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
Resemblance of that glorious faculty
That higher minds bear with them as their own.
This is the very spirit in which they deal
With the whole compass of the universe:
They from their native selves can send abroad
Kindred mutations; for themselves create
A like existence; and, whene'er it dawns
Created for them, catch it, or are caught
By its inevitable mastery,
Like angels stopped upon the wing by sound
Of harmony from Heaven's remotest spheres.
Them the enduring and the transient both
Serve to exalt; they build up greatest things
From least suggestions; ever on the watch,
Willing to work and to be wrought upon,
They need not extraordinary calls
To rouse them; in a world of life they live,
By sensible impressions not enthralled,
But by their quickening impulse made more prompt
To hold fit converse with the spiritual world,
And with the generations of mankind
Spread over time, past, present, and to come,
Age after age, till Time shall be no more.
Such minds are truly from the Deity,
For they are Powers; and hence the highest bliss
That flesh can know is theirs—the consciousness
Of Whom they are, habitually infused
Through every image and through every thought,
And all affections by communion raised
From earth to heaven, from human to divine;
Hence endless occupation for the Soul,
Whether discursive or intuitive;
Hence cheerfulness for acts of daily life,
Emotions which best foresight need not fear,
Most worthy then of trust when most intense.
Hence, amid ills that vex and wrongs that crush
Our hearts—if here the words of Holy Writ
May with fit reverence be applied—that peace
Which passeth understanding, that repose
In moral judgments which from this pure source
Must come, or will by man be sought in vain.

Oh! who is he that hath his whole life long
Preserved, enlarged, this freedom in himself?
For this alone is genuine liberty:
Where is the favoured being who hath held
That course unchecked, unerring, and untired,
In one perpetual progress smooth and bright?—
A humbler destiny have we retraced,
And told of lapse and hesitating choice,

And backward wanderings along thorny ways:
Yet—compassed round by mountain solitudes,
Within whose solemn temple I received
My earliest visitations, careless then
Of what was given me; and which now I range,
A meditative, oft a suffering, man—
Do I declare—in accents which, from truth
Deriving cheerful confidence, shall blend
Their modulation with these vocal streams—
That, whatsoever falls my better mind,
Revolving with the accidents of life,
May have sustained, that, howsoe'er misled,
Never did I, in quest of right and wrong,
Tamper with conscience from a private aim;
Nor was in any public hope the dupe
Of selfish passions; nor did ever yield
Wilfully to mean cares or low pursuits,
But shrunk with apprehensive jealousy
From every combination which might aid
The tendency, too potent in itself,
Of use and custom to bow down the soul
Under a growing weight of vulgar sense,
And substitute a universe of death
For that which moves with light and life informed,
Actual, divine, and true. To fear and love,
To love as prime and chief, for there fear ends,
Be this ascribed; to early intercourse,
In presence of sublime or beautiful forms,
With the adverse principles of pain and joy—
Evil as one is rashly named by men
Who know not what they speak. By love subsists
All lasting grandeur, by pervading love;
That gone, we are as dust.—Behold the fields
In balmy spring-time full of rising flowers
And joyous creatures; see that pair, the lamb
And the lamb's mother, and their tender ways
Shall touch thee to the heart; thou callest this love,
And not inaptly so, for love it is,
Far as it carries thee. In some green bower
Rest, and be not alone, but have thou there
The One who is thy choice of all the world:
There linger, listening, gazing, with delight
Impassioned, but delight how pitiable!
Unless this love by a still higher love
Be hallowed, love that breathes not without awe;
Love that adores, but on the knees of prayer,
By heaven inspired; that frees from chains the soul,
Lifted, in union with the purest, best,
Of earth-born passions, on the wings of praise
Bearing a tribute to the Almighty's Throne.

This spiritual Love acts not nor can exist
Without Imagination, which, in truth,
Is but another name for absolute power
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And Reason in her most exalted mood.
This faculty hath been the feeding source
Of our long labour: we have traced the stream
From the blind cavern whence is faintly heard
Its natal murmur; followed it to light
And open day; accompanied its course
Among the ways of Nature, for a time
Lost sight of it bewildered and engulphed;
Then given it greeting as it rose once more
In strength, reflecting from its placid breast
The works of man and face of human life;
And lastly, from its progress have we drawn
Faith in life endless, the sustaining thought
Of human Being, Eternity, and God.

Imagination having been our theme,
So also hath that intellectual Love,
For they are each in each, and cannot stand
Dividually.—Here must thou be, O Man!
Power to thyself; no Helper hast thou here;
Here keepest thou in singleness thy state:
No other can divide with thee this work:
No secondary hand can intervene
To fashion this ability; 'tis thine,
The prime and vital principle is thine
In the recesses of thy nature, far
From any reach of outward fellowship,
Else is not thine at all. But joy to him,
Oh, joy to him who here hath sown, hath laid
Here, the foundation of his future years!

For all that friendship, all that love can do,
All that a darling countenance can look
Or dear voice utter, to complete the man,
Perfect him, made imperfect in himself,
All shall be his: and he whose soul hath risen
Up to the height of feeling intellect
Shall want no humbler tenderness; his heart
Be tender as a nursing mother's heart;
Of female softness shall his life be full,
Of humble cares and delicate desires,
Mild interests and gentlest sympathies.

Child of my parents! Sister of my soul!
Thanks in sincerest verse have been elsewhere
Poured out for all the early tenderness
Which I from thee imbibed: and 'tis most true
That later seasons owed to thee no less;
For, spite of thy sweet influence and the touch
Of kindred hands that opened out the springs
Of genial thought in childhood, and in spite
Of all that unassisted I had marked
In life or nature of those charms minute
That win their way into the heart by stealth
(Still to the very going-out of youth)
I too exclusively esteemed *that* love,
And sought *that* beauty, which, as Milton sings,
Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down
This over-sternness; but for thee, dear Friend!
My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had stood
In her original self too confident,
Retained too long a countenance severe;
A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds
Familiar, and a favourite of the stars:
But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,
Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,
And teach the little birds to build their nests
And warble in its chambers. At a time
When Nature, destined to remain so long
Foremost in my affections, had fallen back
Into a second place, pleased to become
A handmaid to a nobler than herself,
When every day brought with it some new sense
Of exquisite regard for common things,
And all the earth was budding with these gifts
Of more refined humanity, thy breath,
Dear Sister! was a kind of gentler spring
That went before my steps. Thereafter came
One whom with thee friendship had early paired;
She came, no more a phantom to adorn
A moment, but an inmate of the heart,
And yet a spirit, there for me enshrined
To penetrate the lofty and the low;
Even as one essence of pervading light
Shines, in the brightest of ten thousand stars
And the meek worm that feeds her lonely lamp
Couched in the dewy grass.
With such a theme,
Coleridge! with this my argument, of thee
Shall I be silent? O capacious Soul!
Placed on this earth to love and understand,
And from thy presence shed the light of love,
Shall I be mute, ere thou be spoken of?
Thy kindred influence to my heart of hearts
Did also find its way. Thus fear relaxed
Her overweening grasp; thus thoughts and things
In the self-haunting spirit learned to take
More rational proportions; mystery,
The incumbent mystery of sense and soul,
Of life and death, time and eternity,
Admitted more habitually a mild
Interposition—a serene delight
In closelier gathering cares, such as become
A human creature, howsoe'er endowed,
Poet, or destined for a humbler name;
And so the deep enthusiastic joy,
The rapture of the hallelujah sent
From all that breathes and is, was chastened, stemmed
And balanced by pathetic truth, by trust
In hopeful reason, leaning on the stay
Of Providence; and in reverence for duty,
Here, if need be, struggling with storms, and there
Strewing in peace life's humblest ground with herbs,
At every season green, sweet at all hours.

And now, O Friend! this history is brought
To its appointed close: the discipline
And consummation of a Poet's mind,
In everything that stood most prominent,
Have faithfully been pictured; we have reached
The time (our guiding object from the first)
When we may, not presumptuously, I hope,
Suppose my powers so far confirmed, and such
My knowledge, as to make me capable
Of building up a Work that shall endure.
Yet much hath been omitted, as need was;
Of books how much! and even of the other wealth
That is collected among woods and fields,
Far more: for Nature's secondary grace
Hath hitherto been barely touched upon,
The charm more superficial that attends
Her works, as they present to Fancy's choice
Apt illustrations of the moral world,
Caught at a glance, or traced with curious pains.

Finally, and above all, O Friend! (I speak
With due regret) how much is overlooked
In human nature and her subtle ways,
As studied first in our own hearts, and then
In life among the passions of mankind,
Varying their composition and their hue,
Where'er we move, under the diverse shapes
That individual character presents
To an attentive eye. For progress meet,
Along this intricate and difficult path,
Whate'er was wanting, something had I gained,
As one of many schoolfellows compelled,
In hardy independence, to stand up
Amid conflicting interests, and the shock
Of various tempers; to endure and note
What was not understood, though known to be;
Among the mysteries of love and hate,
Honour and shame, looking to right and left,
Unchecked by innocence too delicate,
And moral notions too intolerant,
Sympathies too contracted. Hence, when called
To take a station among men, the step
Was easier, the transition more secure,
More profitable also; for, the mind
Learns from such timely exercise to keep
In wholesome separation the two natures,
The one that feels, the other that observes.

Yet one word more of personal concern;—
Since I withdrew unwillingly from France,
I led an undomestic wanderer's life,
In London chiefly harboured, whence I roamed,
Tarrying at will in many a pleasant spot
Of rural England's cultivated vales
Or Cambrian solitudes. A youth—(he bore
The name of Calvert—it shall live, if words
Of mine can give it life,) in firm belief
That by endowments not from me withheld
Good might be furthered—in his last decay
By a bequest sufficient for my needs
Enabled me to pause for choice, and walk
At large and unrestrained, nor damped too soon
By mortal cares. Himself no Poet, yet
Far less a common follower of the world,
He deemed that my pursuits and labours lay
Apart from all that leads to wealth, or even
A necessary maintenance insures,
Without some hazard to the finer sense;
He cleared a passage for me, and the stream
Flowed in the bent of Nature.
Having now
Told what best merits mention, further pains
Our present purpose seems not to require,
And I have other tasks. Recall to mind
The mood in which this labour was begun,
O Friend! The termination of my course
Is nearer now, much nearer; yet even then,
In that distraction and intense desire,
I said unto the life which I had lived,
Where art thou? Hear I not a voice from thee
Which 'tis reproach to hear? Anon I rose
As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretched
Vast prospect of the world which I had been
And was; and hence this Song, which, like a lark,
I have protracted, in the unwearied heavens
Singing, and often with more plaintive voice
To earth attempered and her deep-drawn sighs,
Yet centring all in love, and in the end
All gratulant, if rightly understood.

Whether to me shall be allotted life,

And, with life, power to accomplish aught
of worth,
That will be deemed no insufficient plea
For having given the story of myself,
Is all uncertain: but, beloved Friend!
When, looking back, thou seest, in clearer
view
Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,
That summer, under whose indulgent skies,
Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we
roved
Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan
combs,
Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,
Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,
The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;
And I, associate with such labour, steeped
In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,
Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was
found,
After the perils of his moonlight ride,
Near the loud waterfall; or her who sate
In misery near the miserable Thorn—
When thou dost to that summer turn thy
thoughts,
And hast before thee all which then we
were,
To thee, in memory of that happiness,
It will be known, by thee at least, my
Friend!
Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind
Is labour not unworthy of regard;
To thee the work shall justify itself.

The last and later portions of this gift
Have been prepared, not with the buoyant
spirits
That were our daily portion when we first
Together wantoned in wild Poesy,
But, under pressure of a private grief,
Keen and enduring, which the mind and
heart,
That in this meditative history
Have been laid open, needs must make me
feel
More deeply, yet enable me to bear
More firmly; and a comfort now hath risen
From hope that thou art near, and wilt be
soon
Restored to us in renovated health;
When, after the first mingling of our tears,
'Mong other consolations, we may draw
Some pleasure from this offering of my love.

Oh! yet a few short years of useful life,
And all will be complete, thy race be run,
Thy monument of glory will be raised;
Then, though (too weak to tread the ways
of truth)
This age fall back to old idolatry,
Though men return to servitude as fast
As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame,
By nations, sink together, we shall still
Find solace—knowing what we have learnt
to know,
Rich in true happiness if allowed to be
Faithful alike in forwarding a day
Of firmer trust, joint labourers in the work
(Should Providence such grace to us vouch-
safe)
Of their deliverance, surely yet to come.
Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
A lasting inspiration, sanctified
By reason, blest by faith: what we have
loved,
Others will love, and we will teach them
how;
Instruct them how the mind of man be-
comes
A thousand times more beautiful than the
earth
On which he dwells, above this frame of
things
(Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
And fears of men, doth still remain un-
changed)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of quality and fabric more divine.

1799-1805.

THE RECLUSE

PART FIRST

BOOK FIRST—HOME AT GRASMERE

ONCE to the verge of yon steep barrier came
A roving school-boy; what the adventurer's
age
Hath now escaped his memory—but the
hour,
One of a golden summer holiday,
He well remembers, though the year be
gone—
Alone and devious from afar he came;
And, with a sudden influx overpowered
At sight of this seclusion, he forgot
His haste, for hasty had his footsteps been

As boyish his pursuits; and sighing said,
"What happy fortune were it here to live!
And, if a thought of dying, if a thought
Of mortal separation, could intrude
With paradise before him, here to die!"
No Prophet was he, had not even a hope,
Scarcely a wish, but one bright pleasing thought,
A fancy in the heart of what might be
The lot of others, never could be his.
The station whence he looked was soft and green,
Not giddy yet aerial, with a depth
Of vale below, a height of hills above.
For rest of body perfect was the spot,
All that luxurious nature could desire;
But stirring to the spirit; who could gaze
And not feel motions there? He thought of clouds
That sail on winds: of breezes that delight
To play on water, or in endless chase
Pursue each other through the yielding plain
Of grass or corn, over and through and through,
In billow after billow, evermore
Disporting—nor unmindful was the boy
Of sunbeams, shadows, butterflies and birds;
Of fluttering sylphs and softly-gliding Fays,
Genii, and winged angels that are Lords
Without restraint of all which they behold.
The illusion strengthening as he gazed, he felt
That such unfettered liberty was his,
Such power and joy; but only for this end,
To flit from field to rock, from rock to field,
From shore to island, and from isle to shore,
From open ground to covert, from a bed
Of meadow-flowers into a tuft of wood;
From high to low, from low to high, yet still
Within the bound of this huge concave; here
Must be his home, this valley be his world.
Since that day forth the Place to him—*to me*
(For I who live to register the truth
Was that same young and happy Being) became
As beautiful to thought, as it had been
When present, to the bodily sense; a haunt
Of pure affections, shedding upon joy
A brighter joy; and through such damp and gloom
Of the gay mind, as ofttimes splenetic youth
Mistakes for sorrow, darting beams of light
That no self-cherished sadness could withstand;
And now 'tis mine, perchance for life, dear Vale,
Beloved Grasmere (let the wandering streams
Take up, the cloud-capt hills repeat, the Name)
One of thy lowly Dwellings is my Home.
And was the cost so great? and could it seem
An act of courage, and the thing itself
A conquest? who must bear the blame? Sage man
Thy prudence, thy experience, thy desires,
Thy apprehensions—blush thou for them all.
Yes the realities of life so cold,
So cowardly, so ready to betray,
So stinted in the measure of their grace
As we pronounce them, doing them much wrong,
Have been to me more bountiful than hope,
Less timid than desire—but that is past.
On Nature's invitation do I come,
By Reason sanctioned. Can the choice mislead,
That made the calmest fairest spot of earth
With all its unappropriated good
My own; and not mine only, for with me
Entrenched, say rather peacefully embowered,
Under yon orchard, in yon humble cot,
A younger Orphan of a home extinct,
The only Daughter of my Parents dwells.
Ay, think on that, my heart, and cease to stir,
Pause upon that and let the breathing frame
No longer breathe, but all be satisfied.
—Oh, if such silence be not thanks to God
For what hath been bestowed, then where, where then
Shall gratitude find rest? Mine eyes did ne'er
Fix on a lovely object, nor my mind
Take pleasure in the midst of happy thoughts,
But either She whom now I have, who now
Divides with me this loved abode, was there
Or not far off. Where'er my footsteps turned,
Her voice was like a hidden Bird that sang,

The thought of her was like a flash of light,
Or an unseen companionship, a breath
Of fragrance independent of the Wind.
In all my goings, in the new and old
Of all my meditations, and in this
Favourite of all, in this the most of all.
—What being, therefore, since the birth of Man
Had ever more abundant cause to speak
Thanks, and if favours of the Heavenly Muse
Make him more thankful, then to call on Verse
To aid him and in song resound his joy?
The boon is absolute; surpassing grace
To me hath been vouchsafed; among the bowers
Of blissful Eden this was neither given
Nor could be given, possession of the good
Which had been sighed for, ancient thought fulfilled,
And dear Imaginations realised,
Up to their highest measure, yea and more.
Embrace me then, ye Hills, and close me in;
Now in the clear and open day I feel
Your guardianship; I take it to my heart;
'Tis like the solemn shelter of the night.
But I would call thee beautiful, for mild,
And soft, and gay, and beautiful thou art
Dear Valley, having in thy face a smile
Though peaceful, full of gladness. Thou art pleased,
Pleased with thy crags and woody steeps, thy Lake,
Its one green island and its winding shores;
The multitude of little rocky hills,
Thy Church and cottages of mountain stone
Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
Or glancing at each other cheerful looks
Like separated stars with clouds between.
What want we? have we not perpetual streams,
Warm woods, and sunny hills, and fresh green fields,
And mountains not less green, and flocks and herds,
And thickets full of songsters, and the voice
Of lordly birds, an unexpected sound
Heard now and then from morn to latest eve,
Admonishing the man who walks below
Of solitude and silence in the sky?
These have we, and a thousand nooks of earth
Have also these, but nowhere else is found,
Nowhere (or is it fancy?) can be found
The one sensation that is here; 'tis here,
Here as it found its way into my heart
In childhood, here as it abides by day,
By night, here only; or in chosen minds
That take it with them hence, where'er they go.
—'Tis, but I cannot name it, 'tis the sense
Of majesty, and beauty, and repose,
A blended holiness of earth and sky,
Something that makes this individual spot,
This small abiding-place of many men,
A termination, and a last retreat,
A centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
A whole without dependence or defect,
Made for itself, and happy in itself,
Perfect contentment, Unity entire.
Bleak season was it, turbulent and bleak,
When hitherward we journeyed side by side
Through burst of sunshine and through flying showers;
Paced the long vales—how long they were—and yet
How fast that length of way was left behind,
Wensley's rich Vale, and Sedbergh's naked heights.
The frosty wind, as if to make amends
For its keen breath, was aiding to our steps,
And drove us onward like two ships at sea,
Or like two birds, companions in mid-air,
Parted and reunited by the blast.
Stern was the face of nature; we rejoiced
In that stern countenance, for our souls thence drew
A feeling of their strength. The naked trees,
The icy brooks, as on we passed, appeared
To question us. "Whence come ye, to what end?"
They seemed to say, "What would ye," said the shower,
"Wild Wanderers, whither through my dark domain?"
The sunbeam said, "Be happy." When this vale
We entered, bright and solemn was the sky

That faced us with a passionate welcoming,
And led us to our threshold. Daylight failed
Insensibly, and round us gently fell
Composing darkness, with a quiet load
Of full contentment, in a little shed
Disturbed, uneasy in itself as seemed,
And wondering at its new inhabitants.
It loves us now, this Vale so beautiful
Begins to love us! by a sullen storm,
Two months unwearied of severest storm,
It put the temper of our minds to proof,
And found us faithful through the gloom, and heard
The poet mutter his prelusive songs
With cheerful heart, an unknown voice of joy
Among the silence of the woods and hills;
Silent to any gladsomeness of sound
With all their shepherds.
But the gates of Spring
Are opened; churlish winter hath given leave
That she should entertain for this one day;
Perhaps for many genial days to come,
His guests, and make them jocund.—They are pleased,
But most of all the birds that haunt the flood
With the mild summons; inmates though they be
Of Winter's household, they keep festival
This day, who drooped, or seemed to droop, so long;
They show their pleasure, and shall I do less?
Happier of happy though I be, like them
I cannot take possession of the sky,
Mount with a thoughtless impulse, and wheel there
One of a mighty multitude, whose way
Is a perpetual harmony and dance
Magnificent. Behold how with a grace
Of ceaseless motion, that might scarcely seem
Inferior to angelical, they prolong
Their curious pastime, shaping in mid-air,
And sometimes with ambitious wing that soars
High as the level of the mountain tops,
A circuit ampler than the lake beneath,
Their own domain;—but ever, while intent
On tracing and retracing that large round,
Their jubilant activity evolves
Hundreds of curves and circlets, to and fro,
Upwards and downwards; progress intricate
Yet unperplexed, as if one spirit swayed
Their indefatigable flight. 'Tis done,
Ten times and more I fancied it had ceased,
But lo! the vanished company again
Ascending, they approach. I hear their wings
Faint, faint at first; and then an eager sound
Passed in a moment—and as faint again!
They tempt the sun to sport among their plumes;
Tempt the smooth water, or the gleaming ice,
To show them a fair image,—'tis themselves,
Their own fair forms upon the glimmering plain
Painted more soft and fair as they descend,
Almost to touch,—then up again aloft,
Up with a sally and a flash of speed,
As if they scorned both resting-place and rest!
—This day is a thanksgiving, 'tis a day
Of glad emotion and deep quietness;
Not upon me alone hath been bestowed,
Me rich in many onward-looking thoughts,
The penetrating bliss; oh surely these
Have felt it, not the happy choirs of spring,
Her own peculiar family of love
That sport among green leaves, a blither train!
But two are missing, two, a lonely pair
Of milk-white Swans; wherefore are they not seen
Partaking this day's pleasure? From afar
They came, to sojourn here in solitude,
Choosing this Valley, they who had the choice
Of the whole world. We saw them day by day,
Through those two months of unrelenting storm,
Conspicuous at the centre of the Lake
Their safe retreat, we knew them well, I guess
That the whole valley knew them; but to us
They were more dear than may be well believed,
Not only for their beauty, and their still
And placid way of life, and constant love

Inseparable, not for these alone,
But that *their* state so much resembled ours,
They having also chosen this abode;
They strangers, and we strangers, they a pair,
And we a solitary pair like them.
They should not have departed; many days
Did I look forth in vain, nor on the wing
Could see them, nor in that small open space
Of blue unfrozen water, where they lodged
And lived so long in quiet, side by side.
Shall we behold them consecrated friends,
Faithful companions, yet another year
Surviving, they for us, and we for them,
And neither pair be broken? nay perchance
It is too late already for such hope;
The Dalesmen may have aimed the deadly tube,
And parted them; or haply both are gone
One death, and that were mercy given to both.
Recall, my song, the ungenerous thought; forgive,
Thrice favoured Region, the conjecture harsh
Of such inhospitable penalty
Inflicted upon confidence so pure.
Ah! if I wished to follow where the sight
Of all that is before my eyes, the voice
Which speaks from a presiding spirit here,
Would lead me, I should whisper to myself:
They who are dwellers in this holy place
Must needs themselves be hallowed, they require
No benediction from the stranger's lips,
For they are blessed already; none would give
The greeting "peace be with you" unto them,
For peace they have; it cannot but be theirs,
And mercy, and forbearance—nay—not these—
Their healing offices a pure good-will
Precludes, and charity beyond the bounds
Of charity—an overflowing love;
Not for the creature only, but for all
That is around them; love for everything
Which in their happy Region they behold!
  Thus do we soothe ourselves, and when the thought
Is passed, we blame it not for having come.
—What if I floated down a pleasant stream,
And now am landed, and the motion gone,
Shall I reprove myself? Ah no, the stream
Is flowing, and will never cease to flow,
And I shall float upon that stream again.
By such forgetfulness the soul becomes,
Words cannot say how beautiful: then hail,
Hail to the visible Presence, hail to thee,
Delightful Valley, habitation fair!
And to whatever else of outward form
Can give an inward help, can purify,
And elevate, and harmonise, and soothe,
And steal away, and for a while deceive
And lap in pleasing rest, and bear us on
Without desire in full complacency,
Contemplating perfection absolute,
And entertained as in a placid sleep.
  But not betrayed by tenderness of mind
That feared, or wholly overlooked the truth,
Did we come hither, with romantic hope
To find in midst of so much loveliness
Love, perfect love: of so much majesty
A like majestic frame of mind in those
Who here abide, the persons like the place.
Not from such hope, or aught of such belief,
Hath issued any portion of the joy
Which I have felt this day. An awful voice
'Tis true hath in my walks been often heard,
Sent from the mountains or the sheltered fields,
Shout after shout—reiterated whoop,
In manner of a bird that takes delight
In answering to itself: or like a hound
Single at chase among the lonely woods,
His yell repeating; yet it was in truth
A human voice—a spirit of coming night;
How solemn when the sky is dark, and earth
Not dark, nor yet enlightened, but by snow
Made visible, amid a noise of winds
And bleatings manifold of mountain sheep,
Which in that iteration recognise
Their summons, and are gathering round for food,
Devoured with keenness, ere to grove or bank
Or rocky bield with patience they retire.
  That very voice, which, in some timid mood
Of superstitious fancy, might have seemed
Awful as ever stray demoniac uttered,
His steps to govern in the wilderness;

Or as the Norman Curfew's regular beat
To hearths when first they darkened at the knell:
That shepherd's voice, it may have reached mine ear
Debased and under profanation, made
The ready organ of articulate sounds
From ribaldry, impiety, or wrath,
Issuing when shame hath ceased to check the brawls
Of some abused Festivity—so be it.
I came not dreaming of unruffled life,
Untainted manners; born among the hills,
Bred also there, I wanted not a scale
To regulate my hopes; pleased with the good
I shrink not from the evil with disgust,
Or with immoderate pain. I look for Man,
The common creature of the brotherhood,
Differing but little from the Man elsewhere,
For selfishness and envy and revenge,
Ill neighbourhood—pity that this should be—
Flattery and double-dealing, strife and wrong.
Yet is it something gained, it is in truth
A mighty gain, that Labour here preserves
His rosy face, a servant only here
Of the fireside or of the open field,
A Freeman therefore sound and unimpaired:
That extreme penury is here unknown,
And cold and hunger's abject wretchedness
Mortal to body and the heaven-born mind:
That they who want are not too great a weight
For those who can relieve; here may the heart
Breathe in the air of fellow-suffering
Dreadless, as in a kind of fresher breeze
Of her own native element, the hand
Be ready and unwearied without plea,
From tasks too frequent or beyond its power,
For languor or indifference or despair.
And as these lofty barriers break the force
Of winds,—this deep Vale, as it doth in part
Conceal us from the storm, so here abides
A power and a protection for the mind,
Dispensed indeed to other solitudes
Favoured by noble privilege like this,
Where kindred independence of estate
Is prevalent, where he who tills the field,
He, happy man! is master of the field,
And treads the mountains which his Fathers trod.
Not less than halfway up yon mountain's side,
Behold a dusky spot, a grove of Firs
That seems still smaller than it is; this grove
Is haunted—by what ghost? a gentle spirit
Of memory faithful to the call of love;
For, as reports the Dame, whose fire sends up
Yon curling smoke from the grey cot below,
The trees (her first-born child being then a babe)
Were planted by her husband and herself,
That ranging o'er the high and houseless ground
Their sheep might neither want from perilous storm
Of winter, nor from summer's sultry heat,
A friendly covert; "and they knew it well,"
Said she, "for thither as the trees grew up
We to the patient creatures carried food
In times of heavy snow." She then began
In fond obedience to her private thoughts
To speak of her dead husband; is there not
An art, a music, and a strain of words
That shall be life, the acknowledged voice of life,
Shall speak of what is done among the fields,
Done truly there, or felt, of solid good
And real evil, yet be sweet withal,
More grateful, more harmonious than the breath,
The idle breath of softest pipe attuned
To pastoral fancies? Is there such a stream
Pure and unsullied flowing from the heart
With motions of true dignity and grace?
Or must we seek that stream where Man is not?
Methinks I could repeat in tuneful verse,
Delicious as the gentlest breeze that sounds
Through that aerial fir-grove—could preserve
Some portion of its human history
As gathered from the Matron's lips, and tell
Of tears that have been shed at sight of it,
And moving dialogues between this Pair
Who in their prime of wedlock, with joint hands
Did plant the grove, now flourishing, while they
No longer flourish, he entirely gone,
She withering in her loneliness. Be this
A task above my skill—the silent mind

Has her own treasures, and I think of these,
Love what I see, and honour humankind.
No, we are not alone, we do not stand,
My sister here misplaced and desolate,
Loving what no one cares for but ourselves.
We shall not scatter through the plains and rocks
Of this fair Vale, and o'er its spacious heights,
Unprofitable kindliness, bestowed
On objects unaccustomed to the gifts
Of feeling, which were cheerless and forlorn
But few weeks past, and would be so again
Were we not here; we do not tend a lamp
Whose lustre we alone participate,
Which shines dependent upon us alone,
Mortal though bright, a dying, dying flame.
Look where we will, some human hand has been
Before us with its offering; not a tree
Sprinkles these little pastures, but the same
Hath furnished matter for a thought; perchance
For some one serves as a familiar friend.
Joy spreads, and sorrow spreads; and this whole Vale,
Home of untutored shepherds as it is,
Swarms with sensation, as with gleams of sunshine,
Shadows or breezes, scents or sounds. Nor deem
These feelings, though subservient more than ours
To every day's demand for daily bread,
And borrowing more their spirit and their shape
From self-respecting interests; deem them not
Unworthy therefore, and unhallowed—no,
They lift the animal being, do themselves
By nature's kind and ever-present aid
Refine the selfishness from which they spring,
Redeem by love the individual sense
Of anxiousness, with which they are combined.
And thus it is that fitly they become
Associates in the joy of purest minds:
They blend therewith congenially: meanwhile
Calmly they breathe their own undying life
Through this their mountain sanctuary; long
Oh long may it remain inviolate,
Diffusing health and sober cheerfulness,
And giving to the moments as they pass
Their little boons of animating thought
That sweeten labour, make it seen and felt
To be no arbitrary weight imposed,
But a glad function natural to man.
Fair proof of this, newcomer though I be,
Already have I gained; the inward frame,
Though slowly opening, opens every day
With process not unlike to that which cheers
A pensive stranger journeying at his leisure
Through some Helvetian Dell; when low-hung mists
Break up and are beginning to recede;
How pleased he is where thin and thinner grows
The veil, or where it parts at once, to spy
The dark pines thrusting forth their spiky heads;
To watch the spreading lawns with cattle grazed;
Then to be greeted by the scattered huts
As they shine out; and *see* the streams whose murmur
Had soothed his ear while *they* were hidden; how pleased
To have about him which way e'er he goes
Something on every side concealed from view,
In every quarter something visible
Half seen or wholly, lost and found again,
Alternate progress and impediment,
And yet a growing prospect in the main.
Such pleasure now is mine, albeit forced,
Herein less happy than the Traveller,
To cast from time to time a painful look
Upon unwelcome things which unawares
Reveal themselves, not therefore is my heart
Depressed, nor does it fear what is to come;
But confident, enriched at every glance,
The more I see the more delight my mind
Receives, or by reflection can create:
Truth justifies herself, and as she dwells
With Hope, who would not follow where she leads?
Nor let me pass unheeded other loves
Where no fear is, and humbler sympathies.
Already hath sprung up within my heart
A liking for the small grey horse that bears
The paralytic man, and for the brute

In Scripture sanctified—the patient brute
On which the cripple, in the quarry maimed,
Rides to and fro: I know them and their ways.
The famous sheep-dog, first in all the vale,
Though yet to me a stranger, will not be
A stranger long; nor will the blind man's guide,
Meek and neglected thing, of no renown!
Soon will peep forth the primrose, ere it fades
Friends shall I have at dawn, blackbird and thrush
To rouse me, and a hundred warblers more!
And if those Eagles to their ancient hold
Return, Helvellyn's Eagles! with the Pair
From my own door I shall be free to claim
Acquaintance, as they sweep from cloud to cloud.
The owl that gives the name to Owlet-Crag
Have I heard whooping, and he soon will be
A chosen one of my regards. See there
The heifer in yon little croft belongs
To one who holds it dear; with duteous care
She reared it, and in speaking of her charge
I heard her scatter some endearing words
Domestic, and in spirit motherly,
She being herself a mother; happy Beast,
If the caresses of a human voice
Can make it so, and care of human hands.
And ye as happy under Nature's care,
Strangers to me and all men, or at least
Strangers to all particular amity,
All intercourse of knowledge or of love
That parts the individual from his kind.
Whether in large communities ye keep
From year to year, not shunning man's abode,
A settled residence, or be from far
Wild creatures, and of many homes, that come
The gift of winds, and whom the winds again
Take from us at your pleasure; yet shall ye
Not want for this your own subordinate place
In my affections. Witness the delight
With which erewhile I saw that multitude
Wheel through the sky, and see them now at rest,
Yet not at rest upon the glassy lake:
They *cannot* rest—they gambol like young whelps;
Active as lambs, and overcome with joy
They try all frolic motions; flutter, plunge,
And beat the passive water with their wings.
Too distant are they for plain view, but lo!
Those little fountains, sparkling in the sun,
Betray their occupation, rising up
First one and then another silver spout,
As one or other takes the fit of glee,
Fountains and spouts, yet somewhat in the guise
Of plaything fireworks, that on festal nights
Sparkle about the feet of wanton boys.
—How vast the compass of this theatre,
Yet nothing to be seen but lovely pomp
And silent majesty; the birch-tree woods
Are hung with thousand thousand diamond drops
Of melted hoar-frost, every tiny knot
In the bare twigs, each little budding-place
Cased with its several beads; what myriads these
Upon one tree, while all the distant grove,
That rises to the summit of the steep,
Shows like a mountain built of silver light:
See yonder the same pageant, and again
Behold the universal imagery
Inverted, all its sun-bright features touched
As with the varnish and the gloss of dreams.
Dreamlike the blending also of the whole
Harmonious landscape: all along the shore
The boundary lost—the line invisible
That parts the image from reality;
And the clear hills, as high as they ascend
Heavenward, so deep piercing the lake below.
Admonished of the days of love to come
The raven croaks, and fills the upper air
With a strange sound of genial harmony;
And in and all about that playful band,
Incapable although they be of rest,
And in their fashion very rioters,
There is a stillness; and they seem to make
Calm revelry in that their calm abode.
Them leaving to their joyous hours I pass,
Pass with a thought the life of the whole year
That is to come: the throng of woodland flowers
And lilies that will dance upon the waves.
Say boldly then that solitude is not

Where these things are: he truly is alone,
He of the multitude whose eyes are doomed
To hold a vacant commerce day by day
With Objects wanting life—repelling love;
He by the vast metropolis immured,
Where pity shrinks from unremitting calls,
Where numbers overwhelm humanity,
And neighbourhood serves rather to divide
Than to unite—what sighs more deep than his,
Whose nobler will hath long been sacrificed;
Who must inhabit under a black sky
A city, where, if indifference to disgust
Yield not to scorn or sorrow, living men
Are ofttimes to their fellow-men no more
Than to the forest Hermit are the leaves
That hang aloft in myriads; nay, far less,
For they protect his walk from sun and shower,
Swell his devotion with their voice in storms,
And whisper while the stars twinkle among them
His lullaby. From crowded streets remote,
Far from the living and dead Wilderness
Of the thronged world, Society is here
A true community—a genuine frame
Of many into one incorporate.
That must be looked for here: paternal sway,
One household, under God, for high and low,
One family and one mansion; to themselves
Appropriate, and divided from the world,
As if it were a cave, a multitude
Human and brute, possessors undisturbed
Of this Recess—their legislative Hall,
Their Temple, and their glorious Dwelling-place.
Dismissing therefore all Arcadian dreams,
All golden fancies of the golden age,
The bright array of shadowy thoughts from times
That were before all time, or are to be
Ere time expire, the pageantry that stirs
Or will be stirring, when our eyes are fixed
On lovely objects, and we wish to part
With all remembrance of a jarring world,
—Take we at once this one sufficient hope,
What need of more? that we shall neither droop
Nor pine for want of pleasure in the life
Scattered about us, nor through want of aught
That keeps in health the insatiable mind.
—That we shall have for knowledge and for love
Abundance, and that feeling as we do
How goodly, how exceeding fair, how pure
From all reproach is yon ethereal vault,
And this deep Vale, its earthly counterpart,
By which and under which we are enclosed
To breathe in peace; we shall moreover find
(If sound, and what we ought to be ourselves,
If rightly we observe and justly weigh)
The inmates not unworthy of their home,
The Dwellers of their Dwelling.
And if this
Were otherwise, we have within ourselves
Enough to fill the present day with joy,
And overspread the future years with hope,
Our beautiful and quiet home, enriched
Already with a stranger whom we love
Deeply, a stranger of our Father's house,
A never-resting Pilgrim of the Sea,
Who finds at last an hour to his content
Beneath our roof. And others whom we love
Will seek us also, Sisters of our hearts,
And one, like them, a Brother of our hearts,
Philosopher and Poet, in whose sight
These mountains will rejoice with open joy.
—Such is our wealth! O Vale of Peace we are
And must be, with God's will, a happy Band.
Yet 'tis not to enjoy that we exist,
For that end only; something must be done:
I must not walk in unreproved delight
These narrow bounds, and think of nothing more,
No duty that looks further, and no care.
Each Being has his office, lowly some
And common, yet all worthy if fulfilled
With zeal, acknowledgment that with the gift
Keeps pace a harvest answering to the seed.
Of ill-advised Ambition and of Pride
I would stand clear, but yet to me I feel
That an internal brightness is vouchsafed
That must not die, that must not pass away.
Why does this inward lustre fondly seek
And gladly blend with outward fellowship?

Why do *they* shine around me whom I love?
Why do they teach me, whom I thus revere?
Strange question, yet it answers not itself.
That humble Roof embowered among the trees,
That calm fireside, it is not even in them,
Blest as they are, to furnish a reply
That satisfies and ends in perfect rest.
Possessions have I that are solely mine,
Something within which yet is shared by none,
Not even the nearest to me and most dear,
Something which power and effort may impart;
I would impart it, I would spread it wide:
Immortal in the world which is to come—
Forgive me if I add another claim—
And would not wholly perish even in this,
Lie down and be forgotten in the dust,
I and the modest Partners of my days
Making a silent company in death;
Love, knowledge, all my manifold delights,
All buried with me without monument
Or profit unto any but ourselves!
It must not be, if I, divinely taught,
Be privileged to speak as I have felt
Of what in man is human or divine.
While yet an innocent little one, with a heart
That doubtless wanted not its tender moods,
I breathed (for this I better recollect)
Among wild appetites and blind desires,
Motions of savage instinct my delight
And exaltation. Nothing at that time
So welcome, no temptation half so dear
As that which urged me to a daring feat,
Deep pools, tall trees, black chasms, and dizzy crags,
And tottering towers: I loved to stand and read
Their looks forbidding, read and disobey,
Sometimes in act and evermore in thought.
With impulses, that scarcely were by these
Surpassed in strength, I heard of danger met
Or sought with courage; enterprise forlorn
By one, sole keeper of his own intent,
Or by a resolute few, who for the sake
Of glory fronted multitudes in arms.
Yea, to this hour I cannot read a Tale
Of two brave vessels matched in deadly fight,
And fighting to the death, but I am pleased
More than a wise man ought to be; I wish,
Fret, burn, and struggle, and in soul am there.
But me hath Nature tamed, and bade to seek
For other agitations, or be calm;
Hath dealt with me as with a turbulent stream,
Some nursling of the mountains which she leads
Through quiet meadows, after he has learnt
His strength, and had his triumph and his joy,
His desperate course of tumult and of glee.
That which in stealth by Nature was performed
Hath Reason sanctioned: her deliberate Voice
Hath said; be mild, and cleave to gentle things,
Thy glory and thy happiness be there.
Nor fear, though thou confide in me, a want
Of aspirations that have been—of foes
To wrestle with, and victory to complete,
Bounds to be leapt, darkness to be explored;
All that inflamed thy infant heart, the love,
The longing, the contempt, the undaunted quest,
All shall survive, though changed their office, all
Shall live, it is not in their power to die.
Then farewell to the Warrior's Schemes, farewell
The forwardness of soul which looks that way
Upon a less incitement than the Cause
Of Liberty endangered, and farewell
That other hope, long mine, the hope to fill
The heroic trumpet with the Muse's breath!
Yet in this peaceful Vale we will not spend
Unheard-of days, though loving peaceful thought,
A voice shall speak, and what will be the theme?
On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes

Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
—To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessèd consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all—
I sing:—"fit audience let me find though few!"
  So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard—
In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form—
Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man—
My haunt, and the main region of my song
—Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.
—I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation:—and, by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too—
Theme this but little heard of among men—
The external World is fitted to the Mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish:—this is our high argument.
—Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities—may these sounds
Have their authentic comment; that even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!—
Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st[1]
The human Soul of universal earth,
Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess
A metropolitan temple in the hearts
Of mighty Poets; upon me bestow
A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
Shedding benignant influence, and secure
Itself from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway

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[1] See Note.

Throughout the nether sphere!—And if with this
I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
Contemplating; and who, and what he was—
The transitory Being that beheld
This Vision;—when and where, and how he lived;
Be not this labour useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power!
Whose gracious favour is the primal source
Of all illumination—may my Life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners;—nurse
My Heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
Be with me;—so shall thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

The course of the great war with the French naturally fixed one's attention upon the military character, and, to the honour of our country, there were many illustrious instances of the qualities that constitute its highest excellence. Lord Nelson carried most of the virtues that the trials he was exposed to in his department of the service necessarily call forth and sustain, if they do not produce the contrary vices. But his public life was stained with one great crime, so that, though many passages of these lines were suggested by what was generally known as excellent in his conduct, I have not been able to connect his name with the poem as I could wish, or even to think of him with satisfaction in reference to the idea of what a warrior ought to be. For the sake of such of my friends as may happen to read this note I will add, that many elements of the character here pourtrayed were found in my brother John, who perished by shipwreck as mentioned elsewhere. His messmates used to call him the Philosopher, from which it must be inferred that the qualities and dispositions I allude to had not escaped their notice. He often expressed his regret, after the war had continued some time, that he had not chosen the Naval, instead of the East India Company's service, to which his family connection had led him. He greatly valued moral and religious instruction for youth, as tending to make good sailors. The best, he used to say, came from Scotland; the next to them, from the North of England, especially from Westmoreland and Cumberland, where, thanks to the piety and local attachments of our ancestors, endowed, or, as they are commonly called, free, schools abound.

WHO is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;

Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
—He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.
1806.

THE HORN OF EGREMONT CASTLE[1]

A tradition transferred from the ancient mansion of Hutton John, the seat of the Hudlestons, to Egremont Castle.

Ere the Brothers through the gateway
Issued forth with old and young,
To the Horn Sir Eustace pointed
Which for ages there had hung.
Horn it was which none could sound,
No one upon living ground,
Save He who came as rightful Heir
To Egremont's Domains and Castle fair.

Heirs from times of earliest record
Had the House of Lucie born,
Who of right had held the Lordship
Claimed by proof upon the Horn:
Each at the appointed hour
Tried the Horn,—it owned his power;
He was acknowledged: and the blast,
Which good Sir Eustace sounded, was the last.

With his lance Sir Eustace pointed,
And to Hubert thus said he,
"What I speak this Horn shall witness
For thy better memory.
Hear, then, and neglect me not!
At this time, and on this spot,
The words are uttered from my heart,
As my last earnest prayer ere we depart.

"On good service we are going
Life to risk by sea and land,
In which course if Christ our Saviour
Do my sinful soul demand,
Hither come thou back straightway,
Hubert, if alive that day;
Return, and sound the Horn, that we
May have a living House still left in thee!"

"Fear not," quickly answered Hubert;
"As I am thy Father's son,

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[1] See Note.

What thou askest, noble Brother,
With God's favour shall be done."
So were both right well content:
Forth they from the Castle went,
And at the head of their Array
To Palestine the Brothers took their way.

Side by side they fought (the Lucies
Were a line for valour famed),
And where'er their strokes alighted,
There the Saracens were tamed.
Whence, then, could it come—the thought—
By what evil spirit brought?
Oh! can a brave Man wish to take
His Brother's life, for Lands' and Castle's sake?

"Sir!" the Ruffians said to Hubert,
"Deep he lies in Jordan flood."
Stricken by this ill assurance,
Pale and trembling Hubert stood.
"Take your earnings."—Oh! that I
Could have *seen* my Brother die!
It was a pang that vexed him then;
And oft returned, again, and yet again.

Months passed on, and no Sir Eustace!
Nor of him were tidings heard;
Wherefore, bold as day, the Murderer
Back again to England steered.
To his Castle Hubert sped;
Nothing has he now to dread.
But silent and by stealth he came,
And at an hour which nobody could name.

None could tell if it were night-time,
Night or day, at even or morn;
No one's eye had seen him enter,
No one's ear had heard the Horn.
But bold Hubert lives in glee:
Months and years went smilingly;
With plenty was his table spread;
And bright the Lady is who shares his bed.

Likewise he had sons and daughters;
And, as good men do, he sate
At his board by these surrounded,
Flourishing in fair estate.
And while thus in open day
Once he sate, as old books say,
A blast was uttered from the Horn,
Where by the Castle-gate it hung forlorn.

'Tis the breath of good Sir Eustace!
He is come to claim his right:
Ancient castle, woods, and mountains
Hear the challenge with delight.
Hubert! though the blast be blown
He is helpless and alone:
Thou hast a dungeon, speak the word!
And there he may be lodged, and thou be Lord.

Speak!—astounded Hubert cannot;
And, if power to speak he had,
All are daunted, all the household
Smitten to the heart, and sad.
'Tis Sir Eustace; if it be
Living man, it must be he!
Thus Hubert thought in his dismay,
And by a postern-gate he slunk away.

Long, and long was he unheard of:
To his Brother then he came,
Made confession, asked forgiveness,
Asked it by a brother's name,
And by all the saints in heaven;
And of Eustace was forgiven:
Then in a convent went to hide
His melancholy head, and there he died.

But Sir Eustace, whom good angels
Had preserved from murderers' hands,
And from Pagan chains had rescued,
Lived with honour on his lands.
Sons he had, saw sons of theirs:
And through ages, heirs of heirs,
A long posterity renowned,
Sounded the Horn which they alone could sound.
1806.

A COMPLAINT

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Suggested by a change in the manner of a friend.

There is a change—and I am poor;
Your love hath been, not long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow;
And flow it did: not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
Blest was I then all bliss above!
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I? shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love—it may be deep—
I trust it is,—and never dry:
What matter? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
—Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.
1806.

STRAY PLEASURES

"——*Pleasure is spread through the earth*
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find."

Suggested on the Thames by the sight of one of those floating mills that used to be seen there. This I noticed on the Surrey side between Somerset House and Blackfriars Bridge. Charles Lamb was with me at the time; and I thought it remarkable that I should have to point out to *him*, an idolatrous Londoner, a sight so interesting as the happy group dancing on the platform. Mills of this kind used to be, and perhaps still are, not uncommon on the Continent. I noticed several upon the river Saone in the year 1799, particularly near the town of Chalons, where my friend Jones and I halted a day when we crossed France; so far on foot: there we embarked, and floated down to Lyons.

By their floating mill,
That lies dead and still,
Behold yon Prisoners three,
The Miller with two Dames, on the breast of the Thames!
The platform is small, but gives room for them all;
And they're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
To their mill where it floats,
To their house and their mill tethered fast:
To the small wooden isle where, their work to beguile,
They from morning to even take whatever is given;—
And many a blithe day they have past.

In sight of the spires,
All alive with the fires
Of the sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance,—there are three, as jocund as free,
While they dance on the calm river's breast.

Man and Maidens wheel,
They themselves make the reel,
And their music's a prey which they seize;
It plays not for them,—what matter? 'tis theirs;
And if they had care, it has scattered their cares,
While they dance, crying, "Long as ye please!"

They dance not for me,
Yet mine is their glee!
Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find;
Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

The showers of the spring
Rouse the birds, and they sing;
If the wind do but stir for his proper delight,
Each leaf, that and this, his neighbour will kiss;
Each wave, one and t' other, speeds after his brother:
They are happy, for that is their right!
1806.

POWER OF MUSIC

Taken from life.

An Orpheus! an Orpheus! yes, Faith may grow bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of old;—
Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same
In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name.

His station is there; and he works on the crowd,
He sways them with harmony merry and loud;
He fills with his power all their hearts to the brim—
Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and him?

What an eager assembly! what an empire is this!

The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss;
The mourner is cheered, and the anxious have rest;
And the guilt-burthened soul is no longer opprest.

As the Moon brightens round her the clouds of the night,
So He, where he stands, is a centre of light;
It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-browed Jack,
And the pale-visaged Baker's, with basket on back.

That errand-bound 'Prentice was passing in haste—
What matter! he's caught—and his time runs to waste;
The Newsman is stopped, though he stops on the fret;
And the half-breathless Lamplighter—he's in the net!

The Porter sits down on the weight which he bore;
The Lass with her barrow wheels hither her store;—
If a thief could be here he might pilfer at ease;
She sees the Musician, 'tis all that she sees!

He stands, backed by the wall;—he abates not his din
His hat gives him vigour, with boons dropping in,
From the old and the young, from the poorest; and there!
The one-pennied Boy has his penny to spare.

O blest are the hearers, and proud be the hand
Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a band;
I am glad for him, blind as he is!—all the while
If they speak 'tis to praise, and they praise with a smile.

That tall Man, a giant in bulk and in height,
Not an inch of his body is free from delight;
Can he keep himself still, if he would? oh, not he!
The music stirs in him like wind through a tree.

Mark that Cripple who leans on his crutch; like a tower
That long has leaned forward, leans hour after hour!—
That Mother, whose spirit in fetters is bound,
While she dandles the Babe in her arms to the sound.

Now, coaches and chariots! roar on like a stream;
Here are twenty souls happy as souls in a dream:
They are deaf to your murmurs—they care not for you,
Nor what ye are flying, nor what ye pursue!

1806.

STAR-GAZERS

Observed by me in Leicester-square, as here described.

What crowd is this? what have we here! we must not pass it by;
A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky:
Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on Thames's waters float.

The Showman chooses well his place, 'tis Leicester's busy Square;
And is as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and fair;
Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each stands ready with the fee,
And envies him that's looking;—what an insight must it be!

Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause? Shall thy Implement have blame,
A boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to shame?
Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon resplendent vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
The silver moon with all her vales, and hills of mightiest fame,
Doth she betray us when they're seen? or are they but a name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her wrong?
Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long have had
And are returned into themselves, they cannot but be sad?

Or must we be constrained to think that these Spectators rude,
Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
Have souls which never yet have risen, and therefore prostrate lie?
No, no, this cannot be;—men thirst for power and majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful mind employ
Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and steady joy,
That doth reject all show of pride, admits no outward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine!

Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they who pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before:
One after One they take their turn, nor have I one espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied. 1806.

"YES, IT WAS THE MOUNTAIN ECHO"

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The echo came from Nab-scar, when I was walking on the opposite side of Rydal Mere. I will here mention, for my dear Sister's sake, that, while she was sitting alone one day high up on this part of Loughrigg Fell, she was so affected by the voice of the Cuckoo heard from the crags at some distance that she could not suppress a wish to have a stone inscribed with her name among the rocks from which the sound proceeded. On my return from my walk I recited these verses to Mrs. Wordsworth.

Yes, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound!

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like—but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, or strife—
Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too?—yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence·
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence!

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar—
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God,—of God they are.
1806.

"NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT'S NARROW ROOM"

In the cottage, Town-end, Grasmere, one afternoon in 1801, my sister read to me the Sonnets of Milton. I had long been well acquainted with them, but I was particularly struck on that occasion with the dignified simplicity and majestic harmony that runs through most of them,—in character so totally different from the Italian, and still more so from Shakspeare's fine Sonnets. I took fire, if I may be allowed to say so, and produced three Sonnets the same afternoon, the first I ever wrote except an irregular one at school. Of these three, the only one I distinctly remember is—"I grieved for Buonaparté." One was never written down: the third, which was, I believe, preserved, I cannot particularise.

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;

And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.
1806.

PERSONAL TALK

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The last line but two stood, at first, better and more characteristically, thus:

"By my half-kitchen and half-parlour fire."

My Sister and I were in the habit of having the tea-kettle in our little sitting-room; and we toasted the bread ourselves, which reminds me of a little circumstance not unworthy of being set down among these minutiæ. Happening both of us to be engaged a few minutes one morning when we had a young prig of a Scotch lawyer to breakfast with us, my dear Sister, with her usual simplicity, put the toasting-fork with a slice of bread into the hands of this Edinburgh genius. Our little book-case stood on one side of the fire. To prevent loss of time, he took down a book, and fell to reading, to the neglect of the toast, which was burnt to a cinder. Many a time have we laughed at this circumstance, and other cottage simplicities of that day. By the bye, I have a spite at one of this series of Sonnets (I will leave the reader to discover which) as having been the means of nearly putting off for ever our acquaintance with dear Miss Fenwick, who has always stigmatised one line of it as vulgar, and worthy only of having been composed by a country squire.

I

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk.—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight:
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

II

"Yet life," you say, "is life; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."
Even be it so; yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me!
Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
More justly balanced; partly at their feet
And part far from them: sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!

III

Wings have we,—and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,

Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

IV

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:
And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

1806.

ADMONITION

Intended more particularly for the perusal of those who may have happened to be enamoured of some beautiful Place of Retreat, in the Country of the Lakes.

Well may'st thou halt—and gaze with brightening eye!
The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode;—forbear to sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders—who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.
Think what the home must be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants!—Roof, window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched, would melt away.

1806.

"BELOVED VALE! I SAID, WHEN I SHALL CON"

"Beloved Vale!" I said, "when I shall con
Those many records of my childish years,
Remembrance of myself and of my peers
Will press me down: to think of what is gone
Will be an awful thought, if life have one."
But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
Distressed me; from mine eyes escaped no tears;
Deep thought, or dread remembrance, had I none.
By doubts and thousand petty fancies crost
I stood, of simple shame the blushing Thrall;
So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields so small!
A Juggler's balls old Time about him tossed;
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

1806.

"HOW SWEET IT IS, WHEN MOTHER FANCY ROCKS"

How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood!
An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-flowers in flocks;
And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks,
Like a bold Girl, who plays her agile pranks
At Wakes and Fairs with wandering Mountebanks,—
When she stands cresting the Clown's head, and mocks

The crowd beneath her. Verily I think,
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
Or map of the whole world: thoughts, link by link,
Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
And leap at once from the delicious stream.
1806.

"THOSE WORDS WERE UTTERED AS IN PENSIVE MOOD"

"——they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away."

Those words were uttered as in pensive mood
We turned, departing from that solemn sight:
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily wooed!
But now upon this thought I cannot brood;
It is unstable as a dream of night;
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home:
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.
1806.

COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRASMERE LAKE

1806.

Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the grey west; and lo! these waters, steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
A vivid repetition of the stars;
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows beauteously revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.
Is it a mirror?—or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
Her own calm fires?—But list! a voice is near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,
"Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!"

"WITH HOW SAD STEPS, O MOON, THOU CLIMB'ST THE SKY"

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,
"How silently, and with how wan a face!"
Where art thou? Thou so often seen on high
Running among the clouds a Wood nymph's race!
Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath's a sigh
Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!
The northern Wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be:
And all the stars, fast as the clouds were riven,
Should sally forth, to keep thee company,
Hurrying and sparkling through the clear blue heaven.
But, Cynthia! should to thee the palm be given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.
1806.

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US; LATE AND SOON"

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.
1806.

"WITH SHIPS THE SEA WAS SPRINKLED FAR AND NIGH"

WITH Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This Ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;
This Ship to all the rest did I prefer:
When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
No tarrying; where She comes the winds must stir:
On went She, and due north her journey took.
1806.

"WHERE LIES THE LAND TO WHICH YON SHIP MUST GO?"

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
What boots the inquiry?—Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may,
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!
1806.

TO SLEEP

O GENTLE SLEEP! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding Dove,
A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
A Fly, that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above
Now on the water vexed with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience, no;
Hence am I cross and peevish as a child:
Am pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled:
O gentle Creature! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled.
1806.

TO SLEEP

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!
1806.

TO SLEEP

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep!
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names;
The very sweetest, Fancy culls or frames,
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep!
Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering; Balm that tames
All anguish; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most! 1806.

TWO TRANSLATIONS FROM MICHAEL ANGELO, AND A TRANSLATION FROM THE LATIN OF THOMAS WARTON.

GRATEFUL is Sleep, my life in stone bound fast;
More grateful still: while wrong and shame shall last,
On me can Time no happier state bestow
Than to be left unconscious of the woe.
Ah then, lest you awaken me, speak low.

GRATEFUL is Sleep, more grateful still to be
Of marble; for while shameless wrong and woe
Prevail, 'tis best to neither hear nor see.
Then wake me not, I pray you. Hush, speak low.

COME, gentle Sleep, Death's image tho' thou art,
Come share my couch, nor speedily depart;
How sweet thus living without life to lie,
Thus without death how sweet it is to die.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO

Translations from Michael Angelo, done at the request of Mr. Duppa, whose acquaintance I made through Mr. Southey. Mr. Duppa was engaged in writing the life of Michael Angelo, and applied to Mr. Southey and myself to furnish some specimens of his poetic genius.

I

YES! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed;
For if of our affections none finds grace
In sight of Heaven, then, wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour;
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.
1806.

FROM THE SAME

II

No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my Soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold:
Heaven-born, the Soul a heaven-ward course must hold;
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal Form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes: nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
'Tis sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
That kills the soul: love betters what is best,
Even here below, but more in heaven above
1806.

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT

This young man, Raisley Calvert, to whom I was so much indebted, died at Penrith, 1795.

Calvert! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem—
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where'er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse's diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate;—
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived, Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.
1806.

"METHOUGHT I SAW THE FOOTSTEPS OF A THRONE"

The latter part of this Sonnet was a great favourite with my sister S. H. When I saw her lying in death, I could not resist the impulse to compose the Sonnet that follows it.

I

Methought I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapours from mine eyes did shroud—
Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
Ever put on; a miserable crowd,
Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
"Thou art our king, O Death! to thee we groan."
Those steps I clomb; the mists before me gave
Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
With her face up to heaven; that seemed to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!
1806.

LINES

Composed at Grasmere, during a walk one Evening, after a stormy day, the Author having just read in a Newspaper that the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected.

Loud is the Vale! the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone,
A mighty unison of streams!
Of all her Voices, One!

Loud is the Vale;—this inland Depth
In peace is roaring like the Sea
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain deprest,
Importunate and heavy load![1]
The Comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road;

And many thousands now are sad—
Wait the fulfilment of their fear;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

A Power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss;
But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this—

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return?—
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn?
1806.

NOVEMBER 1806

Another year!—another deadly blow!
Another mighty Empire overthrown!
And We are left, or shall be left, alone;
The last that dare to struggle with the Foe.
'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know

---

[1] Importuna e grave salma.—Michael Angelo.

That in ourselves our safety must be sought;
That by our own right hands it must be wrought;
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer!
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.[1]

ADDRESS TO A CHILD

DURING A BOISTEROUS WINTER EVENING

BY MY SISTER

Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

WHAT way does the wind come? What way does he go?
He rides over the water, and over the snow,
Through wood, and through vale; and, o'er rocky height
Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding flight;
He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see;
But how he will come, and whither he goes,
There's never a scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook
And ring a sharp 'larum;—but, if you should look,
There's nothing to see but a cushion of snow
Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were covered with silk.
Sometimes he'll hide in the cave of a rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock;
—Yet seek him,—and what shall you find in the place?
Nothing but silence and empty space;
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he's left, for a bed, to beggars or thieves!
As soon as 'tis daylight to-morrow, with me
You shall go to the orchard, and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn them about;
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright twig
That looked up at the sky so proud and big
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show!

Hark! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle:
—But let him range round; he does us no harm,
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm;
Untouched by his breath see the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light;
Books have we to read,—but that half-stifled knell,
Alas! 'tis the sound of the eight o'clock bell.
—Come now we'll to bed! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care?
He may knock at the door,—we'll not let him in;
May drive at the windows,—we'll laugh at his din;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be;
Here's a *cozie* warm house for Edward and me.
1806.

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

This was composed during my residence at Town-end, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself; but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or *experiences* of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere—

> "A simple child,
> That lightly draws its breath,
> And feels its life in every limb,
> What should it know of death!"—

But it was not so much from feelings of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the Spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines—

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[1] See Note.

> "Obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings;" etc.

To that dream-like vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here: but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of Man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the "Immortality of the Soul," I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorising me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet.

> "The Child is Father of the Man;
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety."
> See p. 171.

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,

The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,

And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. 1803-6.

A PROPHECY. February 1807.

High deeds, O Germans, are to come from you!
Thus in your books the record shall be found,

"A watchword was pronounced, a potent sound—
Arminius!—all the people quaked like dew
Stirred by the breeze; they rose, a Nation, true,
True to herself—the mighty Germany,
She of the Danube and the Northern Sea,
She rose, and off at once the yoke she threw.
All power was given her in the dreadful trance;
Those new-born Kings she withered like a flame."
—Woe to them all! but heaviest woe and shame
To that Bavarian who could first advance
His banner in accursed league with France,
First open traitor to the German name!

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

This was composed while pacing to and fro between the Hall of Coleorton, then rebuilding, and the principal Farm-house of the Estate, in which we lived for nine or ten months. I will here mention that the Song on the Restoration of Lord Clifford, as well as that on the feast of Brougham Castle, were produced on the same ground.

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

1807.

TO THOMAS CLARKSON

ON THE FINAL PASSING OF THE BILL FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE

MARCH 1807

Clarkson! it was an obstinate hill to climb:
How toilsome—nay, how dire—it was, by thee
Is known; by none, perhaps, so feelingly:
But thou, who, starting in thy fervent prime,
Didst first lead forth that enterprise sublime,
Hast heard the constant Voice its charge repeat,
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,
First roused thee.—O true yoke-fellow of Time,
Duty's intrepid liegeman, see, the palm
Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn!
The blood-stained Writing is for ever torn;
And thou henceforth wilt have a good man's calm,
A great man's happiness; thy zeal shall find
Repose at length, firm friend of human kind!

THE MOTHER'S RETURN[1]

BY MY SISTER

Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

A month, sweet Little-ones, is past
Since your dear Mother went away,—
And she to-morrow will return;
To-morrow is the happy day.

O blessèd tidings! thought of joy!
The eldest heard with steady glee;
Silent he stood; then laughed amain,—
And shouted, "Mother, come to me."

Louder and louder did he shout,
With witless hope to bring her near;
"Nay, patience! patience, little boy!
Your tender mother cannot hear."

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[1] See Note.

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through;—
He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed,
But he submits; what can he do?

No strife disturbs his sister's breast;
She wars not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day;
The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note,
And echoes back his sister's glee;
They hug the infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower;
While sweetly shone the evening sun
In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done,—
Our rambles by the swift brook's side
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where two fair swans together glide.

We talked of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,
Of birds that build their nests and sing,
And all "since Mother went away!"

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her our new-born tribes will show,
The goslings green, the ass's colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

—But, see, the evening star comes forth!
To bed the children must depart;
A moment's heaviness they feel,
A sadness at the heart:

'Tis gone—and in a merry fit
They run upstairs in gamesome race;
I, too, infected by their mood,
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Five minutes past—and, O the change!
Asleep upon their beds they lie;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye. 1807.

GIPSIES

Composed at Coleorton. I had observed them, as here described, near Castle Donnington, on my way to and from Derby.

Yet are they here the same unbroken knot
Of human Beings, in the self-same spot!
Men, women, children, yea the frame
Of the whole spectacle the same!
Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
Now deep and red, the colouring of night;
That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
—Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours are gone, while I
Have been a traveller under open sky,
Much witnessing of change and cheer,
Yet as I left I find them here!
The weary Sun betook himself to rest;—
Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,
Outshining like a visible God
The glorious path in which he trod.
And now, ascending, after one dark hour
And one night's diminution of her power,
Behold the mighty Moon! this way
She looks as if at them—but they
Regard not her:—oh better wrong and strife
(By nature transient) than this torpid life;
Life which the very stars reprove
As on their silent tasks they move!
Yet, witness all that stirs in heaven or earth!
In scorn I speak not;—they are what their birth
And breeding suffer them to be;
Wild outcasts of society! 1807.

"O NIGHTINGALE! THOU SURELY ART"

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. (*Mrs. W. say in a note*—"At Coleorton.")

O Nightingale! thou surely art
A creature of a "fiery heart":—
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze:
He did not cease; but cooed—and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
That was the song—the song for me!

1807.

TO LADY BEAUMONT

The winter garden of Coleorton, fashioned out of an old quarry under the superintendence and direction of Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister Dorothy, during the winter and spring we resided there.

LADY! the songs of Spring were in the grove
While I was shaping beds for winter flowers;
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs—to hang upon the warm alcove,
And sheltering wall; and still, as Fancy wove
The dream, to time and nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, Lady! which your feet shall rove.
Yes! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of spring.

1807.

"THOUGH NARROW BE THAT OLD MAN'S CARES"

"——gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

Written at Coleorton. This old man's name was Mitchell. He was, in all his ways and conversation, a great curiosity, both individually and as a representative of past times. His chief employment was keeping watch at night by pacing round the house, at that time building, to keep off depredators. He has often told me gravely of having seen the Seven Whistlers and the Hounds as here described. Among the groves of Coleorton, where I became familiar with the habits and notions of old Mitchell, there was also a labourer of whom, I regret, I had no personal knowledge; for, more than forty years after, when he was become an old man, I learnt that while I was composing verses, which I usually did aloud, he took much pleasure, unknown to me, in following my steps that he might catch the words I uttered; and, what is not a little remarkable, several lines caught in this way kept their place in his memory. My volumes have lately been given to him by my informant, and surely he must have been gratified to meet in print his old acquaintances.

THOUGH narrow be that old Man's cares, and near,
The poor old Man is greater than he seems:
For he hath waking empire, wide as dreams;
An ample sovereignty of eye and ear.
Rich are his walks with supernatural cheer;
The region of his inner spirit teems
With vital sounds and monitory gleams
Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
He the seven birds hath seen, that never part,
Seen the SEVEN WHISTLERS in their nightly rounds,
And counted them: and oftentimes will start—
For overhead are sweeping GABRIEL'S HOUNDS
Doomed, with their impious Lord, the flying Hart
To chase for ever, on aërial grounds!

1807.

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS

See the note. This poem was composed at Coleorton while I was walking to and fro along the path that led from Sir George Beaumont's Farm-house, where we resided, to the Hall which was building at that time.

HIGH in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,

And Emont's murmur mingled with the Song.—
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long:—
"From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming:
Both roses flourish, red and white:
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended.—
Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how She smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!
  They came with banner, spear, and shield,
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood—
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:[1]
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.
  How glad is Skipton at this hour—
Though lonely, a deserted Tower;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom:
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon—though the sleep
Of years be on her!—She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower:—
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer
To see her Master and to cheer—
Him, and his Lady-mother dear!
  Oh! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born—
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.
Who will take them from the light?
—Yonder is a man in sight—
Yonder is a house—but where?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child!
  Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a Shepherd-boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be He who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread!
God loves the Child; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her Babe did say:
'My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best!'
  Alas! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.
—Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distrest;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.
  A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,

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[1] See Note.

A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
—Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty;
And both the undying fish that swim[1]
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant;
He hath kenned them taking wing:
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
—Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;—[1]
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance—
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our Shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored
Like a re-appearing Star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was framed,
How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead:
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and more;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.
1807.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

OR, THE FATE OF THE NORTONS[1]

The earlier half of this Poem was composed at Stockton-upon-Tees, when Mrs. Wordsworth and I were on a visit to her eldest Brother, Mr. Hutchinson, at the close of the year 1807. The country is flat, and the weather was rough. I was accustomed every day to walk to and fro under the shelter of a row of stacks in a field at a small distance from the town, and there poured forth my verses aloud as freely as they would come. Mrs. Wordsworth reminds me that her brother stood upon the punctilio of not sitting down to dinner till I joined the party; and it frequently happened that I did not make my appearance till too late, so that she was made uncomfortable. I here beg her pardon for this and similar transgressions during the whole course of our wedded life. To my beloved Sister the same apology is due.

When, from the visit just mentioned, we returned to Town-end, Grasmere, I proceeded with the Poem; and it may be worth while to note, as a caution to others who may cast their eye on these memoranda, that the skin having been rubbed off my heel by my wearing too tight a shoe, though I desisted from walking I found that the irritation of the wounded part was kept up, by the act of composition, to a degree that made it necessary to give my constitution a holiday. A rapid cure was the consequence. Poetic excitement, when accompanied by protracted labour in composition, has throughout my life brought on more or less bodily derangement. Nevertheless, I am, at the close of my seventy-third year, in what may be called excellent health: so that intellectual labour is not necessarily unfavourable to longevity. But perhaps I ought here to add that mine has been generally carried on out of doors.

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[1] See Note.

Let me here say a few words of this Poem in the way of criticism. The subject being taken from feudal times has led to its being compared to some of Walter Scott's poems that belong to the same age and state of society. The comparison is inconsiderate. Sir Walter pursued the customary and very natural course of conducting an action, presenting various turns of fortune, to some outstanding point on which the mind might rest as a termination or catastrophe. The course I attempted to pursue is entirely different. Everything that is attempted by the principal personages in "The White Doe" fails, so far as its object is external and substantial. So far as it is moral and spiritual it succeeds. The Heroine of the Poem knows that her duty is not to interfere with the current of events, either to forward or delay them, but

"To abide
The shock, and finally secure
O'er pain and grief a triumph pure."

This she does in obedience to her brother's injunction, as most suitable to a mind and character that, under previous trials, had been proved to accord with his. She achieves this not without aid from the communication with the inferior Creature, which often leads her thoughts to revolve upon the past with a tender and humanising influence that exalts rather than depresses her. The anticipated beatification, if I may so say, of her mind, and the apotheosis of the companion of her solitude, are the points at which the Poem aims, and constitute its legitimate catastrophe, far too spiritual a one for instant or widely-spread sympathy, but not therefore the less fitted to make a deep and permanent impression upon that class of minds who think and feel more independently, than the many do, of the surfaces of things and interests transitory because belonging more to the outward and social forms of life than to its internal spirit. How insignificant a thing, for example, does personal prowess appear compared with the fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom; in other words, with struggles for the sake of principle, in preference to victory gloried in for its own sake.

ADVERTISEMENT

During the Summer of 1807 I visited, for the first time, the beautiful country that surrounds Bolton Priory, in Yorkshire; and the Poem of "The White Doe," founded upon a Tradition connected with that place, was composed at the close of the same year.

DEDICATION

In trellised shed with clustering roses gay,
And, Mary! oft beside our blazing fire,
When years of wedded life were as a day
Whose current answers to the heart's desire,
Did we together read in Spenser's Lay
How Una, sad of soul—in sad attire,
The gentle Una, of celestial birth,
To seek her Knight went wandering o'er the earth.

Ah, then, Belovèd! pleasing was the smart,
And the tear precious in compassion shed
For Her, who, pierced by sorrow's thrilling dart,
Did meekly bear the pang unmerited;
Meek as that emblem of her lowly heart
The milk-white Lamb which in a line she led,—
And faithful, loyal in her innocence,
Like the brave Lion slain in her defence.

Notes could we hear as of a faery shell
Attuned to words with sacred wisdom fraught;
Free Fancy prized each specious miracle,
And all its finer inspiration caught;
Till in the bosom of our rustic Cell,
We by a lamentable change were taught
That "bliss with mortal Man may not abide:"
How nearly joy and sorrow are allied!

For us the stream of fiction ceased to flow,
For us the voice of melody was mute.
—But, as soft gales dissolve the dreary snow,
And give the timid herbage leave to shoot,
Heaven's breathing influence failed not to bestow
A timely promise of unlooked-for fruit,
Fair fruit of pleasure and serene content
From blossoms wild of fancies innocent.

It soothed us—it beguiled us—then, to hear
Once more of troubles wrought by magic spell;
And griefs whose aery motion comes not near
The pangs that tempt the Spirit to rebel:
Then, with mild Una in her sober cheer,
High over hill and low adown the dell
Again we wandered, willing to partake
All that she suffered for her dear Lord's sake.

Then, too, this Song *of mine* once more could please,
Where anguish, strange as dreams of restless sleep,
Is tempered and allayed by sympathies
Aloft ascending, and descending deep,
Even to the inferior Kinds; whom forest-trees
Protect from beating sunbeams, and the sweep
Of the sharp winds;—fair Creatures!—to whom Heaven
A calm and sinless life, with love, hath given.

This tragic Story cheered us; for it speaks
Of female patience winning firm repose;
And, of the recompense that conscience seeks,
A bright, encouraging, example shows;
Needful when o'er wide realms the tempest breaks,
Needful amid life's ordinary woes;—
Hence, not for them unfitted who would bless
A happy hour with holier happiness.

He serves the Muses erringly and ill,
Whose aim is pleasure light and fugitive:
Oh, that my mind were equal to fulfil
The comprehensive mandate which they give—
Vain aspiration of an earnest will!
Yet in this moral Strain a power may live,
Belovèd Wife! such solace to impart
As it hath yielded to thy tender heart.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
April 20, 1815.

"Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle—this way or that—
'Tis done; and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And has the nature of infinity.[1]
Yet through that darkness (infinite though it seem
And irremoveable) gracious openings lie,
By which the soul—with patient steps of thought
Now toiling, wafted now on wings of prayer—
May pass in hope, and, though from mortal bonds
Yet undelivered, rise with sure ascent
Even to the fountain-head of peace divine."

"They that deny a God, destroy Man's nobility: for certainly Man is of kinn to the Beast by his Body; and if he be not of kinn to God by his Spirit, he is a base, ignoble Creature. It destroys likewise Magnanimity, and the raising of humane Nature: for take an example of a Dogg, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on, when he finds himself maintained by a Man, who to him is instead of a God, or Melior Natura. Which courage is manifestly such, as that Creature without that confidence of a better Nature than his own could never attain. So Man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon Divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith which human Nature in itself could not obtain."

LORD BACON.

CANTO FIRST

FROM Bolton's old monastic tower[1]
The bells ring loud with gladsome power;
The sun shines bright; the fields are gay
With people in their best array
Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf,
Along the banks of crystal Wharf,
Through the Vale retired and lowly,
Trooping to that summons holy.
And, up among the moorlands, see
What sprinklings of blithe company!
Of lasses and of shepherd grooms,
That down the steep hills force their way,
Like cattle through the budded brooms;
Path, or no path, what care they?
And thus in joyous mood they hie
To Bolton's mouldering Priory.
 What would they there?—Full fifty years
That sumptuous Pile, with all its peers,
Too harshly hath been doomed to taste
The bitterness of wrong and waste:
Its courts are ravaged; but the tower
Is standing with a voice of power,
That ancient voice which wont to call
To mass or some high festival;
And in the shattered fabric's heart
Remaineth one protected part;
A Chapel, like a wild-bird's nest,[1]
Closely embowered and trimly drest;
And thither young and old repair,
This Sabbath-day, for praise and prayer.
 Fast the churchyard fills;—anon
Look again, and they all are gone;
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak![1]
And scarcely have they disappeared
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard:—
With one consent the people rejoice,
Filling the church with a lofty voice!
They sing a service which they feel:
For 'tis the sunrise now of zeal;
Of a pure faith the vernal prime—
In great Eliza's golden time.
 A moment ends the fervent din,
And all is hushed, without and within;
For though the priest, more tranquilly,
Recites the holy liturgy,

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[1] See Note.

The only voice which you can hear
Is the river murmuring near.
—When soft!—the dusky trees between,
And down the path through the open green,
Where is no living thing to be seen;
And through yon gateway, where is found,
Beneath the arch with ivy bound,
Free entrance to the churchyard ground—
Comes gliding in with lovely gleam,
Comes gliding in serene and slow,
Soft and silent as a dream,
A solitary Doe!
White she is as lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon
When out of sight the clouds are driven
And she is left alone in heaven;
Or like a ship some gentle day
In sunshine sailing far away,
A glittering ship, that hath the plain
Of ocean for her own domain.
   Lie silent in your graves, ye dead!
Lie quiet in your churchyard bed!
Ye living, tend your holy cares;
Ye multitude, pursue your prayers;
And blame not me if my heart and sight
Are occupied with one delight!
'Tis a work for sabbath hours
If I with this bright Creature go:
Whether she be of forest bowers,
From the bowers of earth below;
Or a Spirit for one day given,
A pledge of grace from purest heaven.
   What harmonious pensive changes
Wait upon her as she ranges
Round and through this Pile of state
Overthrown and desolate!
Now a step or two her way
Leads through space of open day,
Where the enamoured sunny light
Brightens her that was so bright;
Now doth a delicate shadow fall,
Falls upon her like a breath,
From some lofty arch or wall,
As she passes underneath:
Now some gloomy nook partakes
Of the glory that she makes,—
High-ribbed vault of stone, or cell,
With perfect cunning framed as well
Of stone, and ivy, and the spread
Of the elder's bushy head;
Some jealous and forbidding cell,
That doth the living stars repel,
And where no flower hath leave to dwell.
   The presence of this wandering Doe
Fills many a damp obscure recess
With lustre of a saintly show;
And, reappearing, she no less
Sheds on the flowers that round her blow
A more than sunny liveliness.
But say, among these holy places,
Which thus assiduously she paces,
Comes she with a votary's task,
Rite to perform, or boon to ask?
Fair Pilgrim! harbours she a sense
Of sorrow, or of reverence?
Can she be grieved for quire or shrine,
Crushed as if by wrath divine?
For what survives of house where God
Was worshipped, or where Man abode;
For old magnificence undone;
Or for the gentler work begun
By Nature, softening and concealing,
And busy with a hand of healing?
Mourns she for lordly chamber's hearth
That to the sapling ash gives birth;
For dormitory's length laid bare
Where the wild rose blossoms fair;
Or altar, whence the cross was rent,
Now rich with mossy ornament?
—She sees a warrior carved in stone,
Among the thick weeds, stretched alone;
A warrior, with his shield of pride
Cleaving humbly to his side,
And hands in resignation prest,
Palm to palm, on his tranquil breast;
As little she regards the sight
As a common creature might:
If she be doomed to inward care,
Or service, it must lie elsewhere.
—But hers are eyes serenely bright,
And on she moves—with pace how light!
Nor spares to stoop her head, and taste
The dewy turf with flowers bestrown;
And thus she fares, until at last
Beside the ridge of a grassy grave
In quietness she lays her down;
Gentle as a weary wave
Sinks, when the summer breeze hath died,
Against an anchored vessel's side;
Even so, without distress, doth she
Lie down in peace, and lovingly.
   The day is placid in its going,
To a lingering motion bound,
Like the crystal stream now flowing
With its softest summer sound:
So the balmy minutes pass,
While this radiant Creature lies
Couched upon the dewy grass,

Pensively with downcast eyes.
—But now again the people raise
With awful cheer a voice of praise;
It is the last, the parting song;
And from the temple forth they throng,
And quickly spread themselves abroad,
While each pursues his several road.
But some—a variegated band
Of middle-aged, and old, and young,
And little children by the hand
Upon their leading mothers hung—
With mute obeisance gladly paid
Turn towards the spot, where, full in view,
The white Doe, to her service true,
Her sabbath couch has made.
  It was a solitary mound;
Which two spears' length of level ground
Did from all other graves divide:
As if in some respect of pride;
Or melancholy's sickly mood,
Still shy of human neighbourhood;
Or guilt, that humbly would express
A penitential loneliness.
  "Look, there she is, my Child! draw near;
She fears not, wherefore should we fear?
She means no harm;"—but still the Boy,
To whom the words were softly said,
Hung back, and smiled, and blushed for joy,
A shame-faced blush of glowing red!
Again the Mother whispered low,
"Now you have seen the famous Doe;
From Rylstone she hath found her way
Over the hills this sabbath day
Her work, whate'er it be, is done,
And she will depart when we are gone;
Thus doth she keep, from year to year,
Her sabbath morning, foul or fair."
  Bright was the Creature, as in dreams
The Boy had seen her, yea, more bright;
But is she truly what she seems?
He asks with insecure delight,
Asks of himself, and doubts,—and still
The doubt returns against his will:
Though he, and all the standers-by,
Could tell a tragic history
Of facts divulged, wherein appear
Substantial motive, reason clear,
Why thus the milk-white Doe is found
Couchant beside that lonely mound;
And why she duly loves to pace
The circuit of this hallowed place.
Nor to the Child's inquiring mind
Is such perplexity confined:
For, spite of sober Truth that sees
A world of fixed remembrances
Which to this mystery belong,
If, undeceived, my skill can trace
The characters of every face,
There lack not strange delusion here,
Conjecture vague, and idle fear,
And superstitious fancies strong,
Which do the gentle Creature wrong.
  That bearded, staff-supported Sire—
Who in his boyhood often fed
Full cheerily on convent-bread
And heard old tales by the convent-fire,
And to his grave will go with scars,
Relics of long and distant wars—
That Old Man, studious to expound
The spectacle, is mounting high
To days of dim antiquity;
When Lady Aäliza mourned[1]
Her Son, and felt in her despair
The pang of unavailing prayer;
Her Son in Wharf's abysses drowned,
The noble Boy of Egremound.
From which affliction—when the grace
Of God had in her heart found place—
A pious structure, fair to see,
Rose up, this stately Priory!
The Lady's work;—but now laid low;
To the grief of her soul that doth come and go,
In the beautiful form of this innocent Doe:
Which, though seemingly doomed in its breast to sustain
A softened remembrance of sorrow and pain,
Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright;
And glides o'er the earth like an angel of light.
  Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door;[1]
And, through the chink in the fractured floor
Look down, and see a griesly sight;
A vault where the bodies are buried upright!
There, face by face, and hand by hand,
The Claphams and Mauleverers stand;
And, in his place, among son and sire,
Is John de Clapham, that fierce Esquire,
A valiant man, and a name of dread
In the ruthless wars of the White and Red;
Who dragged Earl Pembroke from Banbury church
And smote off his head on the stones of the porch!

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[1] See Note.

Look down among them, if you dare;
Oft does the White Doe loiter there,
Prying into the darksome rent;
Nor can it be with good intent:
So thinks that Dame of haughty air,
Who hath a Page her book to hold,
And wears a frontlet edged with gold.
Harsh thoughts with her high mood agree—
Who counts among her ancestry
Earl Pembroke, slain so impiously!
  That slender Youth, a scholar pale,
From Oxford come to his native vale,
He also hath his own conceit:
It is, thinks he, the gracious Fairy,
Who loved the Shepherd-lord to meet [1]
In his wanderings solitary:
Wild notes she in his hearing sang,
A song of Nature's hidden powers;
That whistled like the wind, and rang
Among the rocks and holly bowers.
'Twas said that She all shapes could wear;
And oftentimes before him stood,
Amid the trees of some thick wood,
In semblance of a lady fair;
And taught him signs, and showed him sights,
In Craven's dens, on Cumbrian heights;
When under cloud of fear he lay,
A shepherd clad in homely grey;
Nor left him at his later day.
And hence, when he, with spear and shield,
Rode full of years to Flodden-field,
His eye could see the hidden spring,
And how the current was to flow;
The fatal end of Scotland's King,
And all that hopeless overthrow.
But not in wars did he delight,
This Clifford wished for worthier might;
Nor in broad pomp, or courtly state;
Him his own thoughts did elevate,—
Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden's lowly quietness.
And choice of studious friends had he
Of Bolton's dear fraternity;
Who, standing on this old church tower,
In many a calm propitious hour,
Perused, with him, the starry sky;
Or, in their cells, with him did pry
For other lore,—by keen desire
Urged to close toil with chemic fire;
In quest belike of transmutations
Rich as the mine's most bright creations.
But they and their good works are fled,
And all is now disquieted—
And peace is none, for living or dead!
  Ah, pensive Scholar, think not so,
But look again at the radiant Doe!
What quiet watch she seems to keep,
Alone, beside that grassy heap!
Why mention other thoughts unmeet
For vision so composed and sweet?
While stand the people in a ring,
Gazing, doubting, questioning;
Yea, many overcome in spite
Of recollections clear and bright;
Which yet do unto some impart
An undisturbed repose of heart.
And all the assembly own a law
Of orderly respect and awe;
But see—they vanish one by one,
And last, the Doe herself is gone.
  Harp! we have been full long beguiled
By vague thoughts, lured by fancies wild;
To which, with no reluctant strings,
Thou hast attuned thy murmurings;
And now before this Pile we stand
In solitude, and utter peace:
But, Harp! thy murmurs may not cease—
A Spirit, with his angelic wings,
In soft and breeze-like visitings,
Has touched thee—and a Spirit's hand:
A voice is with us—a command
To chant, in strains of heavenly glory,
A tale of tears, a mortal story!

CANTO SECOND

THE Harp in lowliness obeyed;
And first we sang of the greenwood shade
And a solitary Maid;
Beginning, where the song must end,
With her, and with her sylvan Friend;
The Friend who stood before her sight,
Her only unextinguished light;
Her last companion in a dearth
Of love, upon a hopeless earth.
  For She it was—this Maid, who wrought
Meekly, with foreboding thought,
In vermeil colours and in gold
An unblest work; which, standing by,
Her Father did with joy behold,—
Exulting in its imagery;
A Banner, fashioned to fulfil
Too perfectly his headstrong will:
For on this Banner had her hand
Embroidered (such her Sire's command)
The sacred Cross; and figured there

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[1] See Note.

The five dear wounds our Lord did bear;
Full soon to be uplifted high,
And float in rueful company!
  It was the time when England's Queen
Twelve years had reigned, a Sovereign dread;
Nor yet the restless crown had been
Disturbed upon her virgin head;
But now the inly-working North
Was ripe to send its thousands forth,
A potent vassalage, to fight
In Percy's and in Neville's right,
Two Earls fast leagued in discontent,
Who gave their wishes open vent;
And boldly urged a general plea,
The rites of ancient piety
To be triumphantly restored,
By the stern justice of the sword!
And that same Banner, on whose breast
The blameless Lady had exprest
Memorials chosen to give life
And sunshine to a dangerous strife;
That Banner, waiting for the Call,
Stood quietly in Rylstone-hall.
  It came; and Francis Norton said,
"O Father! rise not in this fray—
The hairs are white upon your head;
Dear Father, hear me when I say
It is for you too late a day!
Bethink you of your own good name:
A just and gracious Queen have we,
A pure religion, and the claim
Of peace on our humanity.—
'Tis meet that I endure your scorn;
I am your son, your eldest born;
But not for lordship or for land,
My Father, do I clasp your knees;
The Banner touch not, stay your hand,
This multitude of men disband,
And live at home in blameless ease;
For these my brethren's sake, for me;
And, most of all, for Emily!"
  Tumultuous noises filled the hall;
And scarcely could the Father hear
That name—pronounced with a dying fall—
The name of his only Daughter dear,
As on the banner which stood near
He glanced a look of holy pride,
And his moist eyes were glorified;
Then did he seize the staff, and say:
"Thou, Richard, bear'st thy father's name,
Keep thou this ensign till the day
When I of thee require the same:
Thy place be on my better hand;—
And seven as true as thou, I see,
Will cleave to this good cause and me."
He spake, and eight brave sons straightway
All followed him, a gallant band!
  Thus, with his sons, when forth he came
The sight was hailed with loud acclaim
And din of arms and minstrelsy,
From all his warlike tenantry,
All horsed and harnessed with him to ride,—
A voice to which the hills replied!
  But Francis, in the vacant hall,
Stood silent under dreary weight,—
A phantasm, in which roof and wall
Shook, tottered, swam before his sight;
A phantasm like a dream of night!
Thus overwhelmed, and desolate,
He found his way to a postern-gate;
And, when he waked, his languid eye
Was on the calm and silent sky;
With air about him breathing sweet,
And earth's green grass beneath his feet;
Nor did he fail ere long to hear
A sound of military cheer,
Faint—but it reached that sheltered spot;
He heard, and it disturbed him not.
  There stood he, leaning on a lance
Which he had grasped unknowingly,
Had blindly grasped in that strong trance,
That dimness of heart-agony;
There stood he, cleansed from the despair
And sorrow of his fruitless prayer.
The past he calmly hath reviewed:
But where will be the fortitude
Of this brave man, when he shall see
That Form beneath the spreading tree,
And know that it is Emily?
  He saw her where in open view
She sate beneath the spreading yew—
Her head upon her lap, concealing
In solitude her bitter feeling:
"Might ever son *command* a sire,
The act were justified to-day."
This to himself—and to the Maid,
Whom now he had approached, he said—
"Gone are they,—they have their desire;
And I with thee one hour will stay,
To give thee comfort if I may."
  She heard, but looked not up, nor spake;
And sorrow moved him to partake
Her silence; then his thoughts turned round,
And fervent words a passage found.
  "Gone are they, bravely, though misled;

With a dear Father at their head !
The Sons obey a natural lord ;
The Father had given solemn word
To noble Percy ; and a force
Still stronger, bends him to his course.
This said, our tears to-day may fall
As at an innocent funeral.
In deep and awful channel runs
This sympathy of Sire and Sons ;
Untried our Brothers have been loved
With heart by simple nature moved ;
And now their faithfulness is proved :
For faithful we must call them, bearing
That soul of conscientious daring.
—There were they all in circle—there
Stood Richard, Ambrose, Christopher,
John with a sword that will not fail,
And Marmaduke in fearless mail,
And those bright Twins were side by side ;
And there, by fresh hopes beautified,
Stood He, whose arm yet lacks the power
Of man, our youngest, fairest flower !
I, by the right of eldest born,
And in a second father's place,
Presumed to grapple with their scorn,
And meet their pity face to face ;
Yea, trusting in God's holy aid,
I to my Father knelt and prayed ;
And one, the pensive Marmaduke,
Methought, was yielding inwardly,
And would have laid his purpose by,
But for a glance of his Father's eye,
Which I myself could scarcely brook.
  Then be we, each and all, forgiven !
Thou, chiefly thou, my Sister dear,
Whose pangs are registered in heaven—
The stifled sigh, the hidden tear,
And smiles, that dared to take their place,
Meek filial smiles, upon thy face,
As that unhallowed Banner grew
Beneath a loving old Man's view.
Thy part is done—thy painful part ;
Be thou then satisfied in heart !
A further, though far easier, task
Than thine hath been, my duties ask ;
With theirs my efforts cannot blend,
I cannot for such cause contend ;
Their aims I utterly forswear ;
But I in body will be there.
Unarmed and naked will I go,
Be at their side, come weal or woe :
On kind occasions I may wait,
See, hear, obstruct, or mitigate.
Bare breast I take and an empty hand."[1]—
Therewith he threw away the lance,
Which he had grasped in that strong trance,
Spurned it, like something that would stand
Between him and the pure intent
Of love on which his soul was bent.
  "For thee, for thee, is left the sense
Of trial past without offence
To God or man ; such innocence,
Such consolation, and the excess
Of an unmerited distress ;
In that thy very strength must lie.
—O Sister, I could prophesy !
The time is come that rings the knell
Of all we loved, and loved so well :
Hope nothing, if I thus may speak
To thee, a woman, and thence weak :
Hope nothing, I repeat ; for we
Are doomed to perish utterly :
'Tis meet that thou with me divide
The thought while I am by thy side,
Acknowledging a grace in this,
A comfort in the dark abyss.
But look not for me when I am gone,
And be no farther wrought upon :
Farewell all wishes, all debate,
All prayers for this cause, or for that !
Weep, if that aid thee ; but depend
Upon no help of outward friend ;
Espouse thy doom at once, and cleave
To fortitude without reprieve.
For we must fall, both we and ours—
This Mansion and these pleasant bowers,
Walks, pools, and arbours, homestead, hall—
Our fate is theirs, will reach them all ;
The young horse must forsake his manger,
And learn to glory in a Stranger ;
The hawk forget his perch ; the hound
Be parted from his ancient ground :
The blast will sweep us all away—
One desolation, one decay !
And even this Creature !" which words saying,
He pointed to a lovely Doe,
A few steps distant, feeding, straying ;
Fair creature, and more white than snow !
"Even she will to her peaceful woods
Return, and to her murmuring floods,
And be in heart and soul the same

---

[1] See the Old Ballad,—"The Rising of the North."

She was before she hither came;
Ere she had learned to love us all,
Herself beloved in Rylstone-hall.
—But thou, my Sister, doomed to be
The last leaf on a blasted tree;
If not in vain we breathed the breath
Together of a purer faith;
If hand in hand we have been led,
And thou, (O happy thought this day:)
Not seldom foremost in the way;
If on one thought our minds have fed,
And we have in one meaning read;
If, when at home our private weal
Hath suffered from the shock of zeal,
Together we have learned to prize
Forbearance and self-sacrifice;
If we like combatants have fared,
And for this issue been prepared;
If thou art beautiful, and youth
And thought endue thee with all truth—
Be strong;—be worthy of the grace
Of God, and fill thy destined place:
A Soul, by force of sorrows high,
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed humanity!"
He ended,—or she heard no more;
He led her from the yew-tree shade,
And at the mansion's silent door,
He kissed the consecrated Maid;
And down the valley then pursued,
Alone, the armèd Multitude.

CANTO THIRD

Now joy for you who from the towers
Of Brancepeth look in doubt and fear,[1]
Telling melancholy hours!
Proclaim it, let your Masters hear
That Norton with his band is near!
The watchmen from their station high
Pronounced the word,—and the Earls descry,
Well-pleased, the armèd Company
Marching down the banks of Were.
Said fearless Norton to the pair
Gone forth to greet him on the plain—
"This meeting, noble Lords! looks fair,
I bring with me a goodly train;
Their hearts are with you: hill and dale
Have helped us: Ure we crossed, and Swale,
And horse and harness followed—see
The best part of their Yeomanry!
—Stand forth, my Sons!—these eight are mine,
Whom to this service I commend;
Which way soe'er our fate incline,
These will be faithful to the end;
They are my all"—voice failed him here—
"My all save one, a Daughter dear!
Whom I have left, Love's mildest birth,
The meekest Child on this blessed earth.
I had—but these are by my side,
These Eight, and this is a day of pride!
The time is ripe. With festive din
Lo! how the people are flocking in,—
Like hungry fowl to the feeder's hand
When snow lies heavy upon the land."
He spake bare truth; for far and near
From every side came noisy swarms
Of Peasants in their homely gear;
And, mixed with these, to Brancepeth came
Grave Gentry of estate and name,
And Captains known for worth in arms
And prayed the Earls in self-defence
To rise, and prove their innocence.—
"Rise, noble Earls, put forth your might
For holy Church, and the People's right!"
The Norton fixed, at this demand,
His eye upon Northumberland,
And said; "The Minds of Men will own
No loyal rest while England's Crown
Remains without an Heir, the bait
Of strife and factions desperate;
Who, paying deadly hate in kind
Through all things else, in this can find
A mutual hope, a common mind;
And plot, and pant to overwhelm
All ancient honour in the realm.
—Brave Earls! to whose heroic veins
Our noblest blood is given in trust,
To you a suffering State complains,
And ye must raise her from the dust.
With wishes of still bolder scope
On you we look, with dearest hope;
Even for our Altars—for the prize,
In Heaven, of life that never dies;
For the old and holy Church we mourn,
And must in joy to her return.
Behold!"—and from his Son whose stand
Was on his right, from that guardian hand
He took the Banner, and unfurled
The precious folds—"behold," said he,
"The ransom of a sinful world;
Let this your preservation be;

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[1] See Note.

The wounds of hands and feet and side,
And the sacred Cross on which Jesus died.
—This bring I from an ancient hearth,
These Records wrought in pledge of love
By hands of no ignoble birth,
A Maid o'er whom the blessed Dove
Vouchsafed in gentleness to brood
While she the holy work pursued."
"Uplift the Standard!" was the cry
From all the listeners that stood round,
"Plant it,—by this we live or die."
The Norton ceased not for that sound,
But said; "The prayer which ye have heard,
Much-injured Earls! by these preferred,
Is offered to the Saints, the sigh
Of tens of thousands, secretly."
"Uplift it!" cried once more the Band,
And then a thoughtful pause ensued:
"Uplift it!" said Northumberland—
Whereat, from all the multitude
Who saw the Banner reared on high
In all its dread emblazonry,
A voice of uttermost joy brake out:
The transport was rolled down the river of Were,
And Durham, the time-honoured Durham, did hear,
And the towers of Saint Cuthbert were stirred by the shout!
  Now was the North in arms:—they shine
In warlike trim from Tweed to Tyne,
At Percy's voice: and Neville sees
His Followers gathering in from Tees,
From Were, and all the little rills
Concealed among the forkèd hills—
Seven hundred Knights, Retainers all
Of Neville, at their Master's call
Had sate together in Raby Hall!
Such strength that Earldom held of yore;
Nor wanted at this time rich store
Of well-appointed chivalry.
—Not loth the sleepy lance to wield,
And greet the old paternal shield,
They heard the summons;—and, furthermore,
Horsemen and Foot of each degree,
Unbound by pledge of fealty,
Appeared, with free and open hate
Of novelties in Church and State;
Knight, burgher, yeoman, and esquire;
And Romish priest, in priest's attire.
And thus, in arms, a zealous Band
Proceeding under joint command,
To Durham first their course they bear;
And in Saint Cuthbert's ancient seat
Sang mass,—and tore the book of prayer,—
And trod the bible beneath their feet.
  Thence marching southward smooth and free
"They mustered their host at Wetherby,
Full sixteen thousand fair to see,"[1]
The Choicest Warriors of the North!
But none for beauty and for worth
Like those eight Sons—who, in a ring,
(Ripe men, or blooming in life's spring)
Each with a lance, erect and tall,
A falchion, and a buckler small,
Stood by their Sire, on Clifford-moor,
To guard the Standard which he bore.
On foot they girt their Father round;
And so will keep the appointed ground
Where'er their march: no steed will he
Henceforth bestride;—triumphantly,
He stands upon the grassy sod,
Trusting himself to the earth, and God.
Rare sight to embolden and inspire!
Proud was the field of Sons and Sire;
Of him the most; and, sooth to say,
No shape of man in all the array
So graced the sunshine of that day.
The monumental pomp of age
Was with this goodly Personage;
A stature undepressed in size,
Unbent, which rather seemed to rise,
In open victory o'er the weight
Of seventy years, to loftier height;
Magnific limbs of withered state;
A face to fear and venerate;
Eyes dark and strong; and on his head
Bright locks of silver hair, thick spread,
Which a brown morion half-concealed,
Light as a hunter's of the field;
And thus, with girdle round his waist,
Whereon the Banner-staff might rest
At need, he stood, advancing high
The glittering, floating Pageantry.
  Who sees him?—thousands see, and One
With unparticipated gaze;
Who, 'mong those thousands, friend hath none,
And treads in solitary ways.
He, following wheresoe'er he might,
Hath watched the Banner from afar,
As shepherds watch a lonely star,
Or mariners the distant light
That guides them through a stormy night.

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[1] From the old ballad.

And now, upon a chosen plot
Of rising ground, yon heathy spot!
He takes alone his far-off stand,
With breast unmailed, unweaponed hand.
Bold is his aspect; but his eye
Is pregnant with anxiety,
While, like a tutelary Power,
He there stands fixed from hour to hour:
Yet sometimes in more humble guise,
Upon the turf-clad height he lies
Stretched, herdsman-like, as if to bask
In sunshine were his only task,
Or by his mantle's help to find
A shelter from the nipping wind:
And thus, with short oblivion blest,
His weary spirits gather rest.
Again he lifts his eyes; and lo!
The pageant glancing to and fro;
And hope is wakened by the sight,
He thence may learn, ere fall of night,
Which way the tide is doomed to flow.
To London were the Chieftains bent;
But what avails the bold intent?
A Royal army is gone forth
To quell the RISING OF THE NORTH;
They march with Dudley at their head,
And, in seven days' space, will to York be led!—
Can such a mighty Host be raised
Thus suddenly, and brought so near?
The Earls upon each other gazed,
And Neville's cheek grew pale with fear;
For, with a high and valiant name,
He bore a heart of timid frame;
And bold if both had been, yet they
"Against so many may not stay." [1]
Back therefore will they hie to seize
A strong Hold on the banks of Tees
There wait a favourable hour,
Until Lord Dacre with his power
From Naworth come; and Howard's aid
Be with them openly displayed.
While through the Host, from man to man,
A rumour of this purpose ran,
The Standard trusting to the care
Of him who heretofore did bear
That charge, impatient Norton sought
The Chieftains to unfold his thought,
And thus abruptly spake;—"We yield
(And can it be?) an unfought field!—
How oft has strength, the strength of heaven,
To few triumphantly been given!
Still do our very children boast
Of mitred Thurston—what a Host
He conquered![2]—Saw we not the Plain
(And flying shall behold again)
Where faith was proved?—while to battle moved
The Standard, on the Sacred Wain
That bore it, compassed round by a bold
Fraternity of Barons old;
And with those grey-haired champions stood,
Under the saintly ensigns three,
The infant Heir of Mowbray's blood—
All confident of victory!—
Shall Percy blush, then, for his name?
Must Westmoreland be asked with shame
Whose were the numbers, where the loss,
In that other day of Neville's Cross?[2]
When the Prior of Durham with holy hand
Raised, as the Vision gave command,
Saint Cuthbert's Relic—far and near
Kenned on the point of a lofty spear;
While the Monks prayed in Maiden's Bower
To God descending in his power.
Less would not at our need be due
To us, who war against the Untrue;—
The delegates of Heaven we rise,
Convoked the impious to chastise:
We, we, the sanctities of old
Would re-establish and uphold:
Be warned"—His zeal the Chiefs confounded,
But word was given, and the trumpet sounded:
Back through the melancholy Host
Went Norton, and resumed his post.
Alas! thought he, and have I borne
This Banner raised with joyful pride,
This hope of all posterity,
By those dread symbols sanctified;
Thus to become at once the scorn
Of babbling winds as they go by,
A spot of shame to the sun's bright eye,
To the light clouds a mockery!
—"Even these poor eight of mine would stem—"
Half to himself, and half to them
He spake—"would stem, or quell, a force
Ten times their number, man and horse:
This by their own unaided might,
Without their father in their sight,
Without the Cause for which they fight;
A Cause, which on a needful day

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[1] From the old ballad.

[2] See Note.

Would breed us thousands brave as they."
—So speaking, he his reverend head
Raised towards that Imagery once more:
But the familiar prospect shed
Despondency unfelt before:
A shock of intimations vain,
Dismay, and superstitious pain,
Fell on him, with the sudden thought
Of her by whom the work was wrought:—
Oh wherefore was her countenance bright
With love divine and gentle light?
She would not, could not, disobey,
But her Faith leaned another way.
Ill tears she wept; I saw them fall,
I overheard her as she spake
Sad words to that mute Animal,
The White Doe, in the hawthorn brake;
She steeped, but not for Jesu's sake,
This Cross in tears: by her, and One
Unworthier far we are undone—
Her recreant Brother—he prevailed
Over that tender Spirit—assailed
Too oft, alas! by her whose head
In the cold grave hath long been laid:
She first, in reason's dawn beguiled
Her docile, unsuspecting Child:
Far back—far back my mind must go
To reach the well-spring of this woe!
  While thus he brooded, music sweet
Of border tunes was played to cheer
The footsteps of a quick retreat;
But Norton lingered in the rear,
Stung with sharp thoughts; and ere the last
From his distracted brain was cast,
Before his Father, Francis stood,
And spake in firm and earnest mood.
  "Though here I bend a suppliant knee
In reverence, and unarmed, I bear
In your indignant thoughts my share;
Am grieved this backward march to see
So careless and disorderly.
I scorn your Chiefs—men who would lead,
And yet want courage at their need:
Then look at them with open eyes!
Deserve they further sacrifice?—
If—when they shrink, nor dare oppose
In open field their gathering foes,
(And fast, from this decisive day,
Yon multitude must melt away;)
If now I ask a grace not claimed
While ground was left for hope; unblamed
Be an endeavour that can do
No injury to them or you.
My Father! I would help to find
A place of shelter, till the rage
Of cruel men do like the wind
Exhaust itself and sink to rest;
Be Brother now to Brother joined!
Admit me in the equipage
Of your misfortunes, that at least,
Whatever fate remain behind,
I may bear witness in my breast
To your nobility of mind!"
  "Thou Enemy, my bane and blight!
Oh! bold to fight the Coward's fight
Against all good"—but why declare,
At length, the issue of a prayer
Which love had prompted, yielding scope
Too free to one bright moment's hope?
Suffice it that the Son, who strove
With fruitless effort to allay
That passion, prudently gave way;
Nor did he turn aside to prove
His Brothers' wisdom or their love—
But calmly from the spot withdrew;
His best endeavours to renew,
Should e'er a kindlier time ensue.

CANTO FOURTH

'TIS night: in silence looking down,
The Moon, from cloudless ether, sees
A Camp, and a beleaguered Town,
And Castle, like a stately crown
On the steep rocks of winding Tees;—
And southward far, with moor between,
Hill-top, and flood, and forest green,
The bright Moon sees that valley small
Where Rylstone's old sequestered Hall
A venerable image yields
Of quiet to the neighbouring fields;
While from one pillared chimney breathes
The smoke, and mounts in silver wreaths.
—The courts are hushed;—for timely sleep
The greyhounds to their kennel creep;
The peacock in the broad ash tree
Aloft is roosted for the night,
He who in proud prosperity
Of colours manifold and bright
Walked round, affronting the daylight;
And higher still, above the bower
Where he is perched, from yon lone Tower
The hall-clock in the clear moonshine
With glittering finger points at nine.
  Ah! who could think that sadness here
Hath any sway? or pain, or fear?
A soft and lulling sound is heard
Of streams inaudible by day;

The garden pool's dark surface, stirred
By the night insects in their play,
Breaks into dimples small and bright;
A thousand, thousand rings of light
That shape themselves and disappear
Almost as soon as seen:—and lo!
Not distant far, the milk-white Doe—
The same who quietly was feeding
On the green herb, and nothing heeding,
When Francis, uttering to the Maid
His last words in the yew-tree shade,
Involved whate'er by love was brought
Out of his heart, or crossed his thought,
Or chance presented to his eye,
In one sad sweep of destiny—
The same fair Creature, who hath found
Her way into forbidden ground;
Where now—within this spacious plot
For pleasure made, a goodly spot,
With lawns and beds of flowers, and shades
Of trellis-work in long arcades,
And cirque and crescent framed by wall
Of close-clipt foliage green and tall,
Converging walks, and fountains gay,
And terraces in trim array—
Beneath yon cypress spiring high,
With pine and cedar spreading wide
Their darksome boughs on either side,
In open moonlight doth she lie;
Happy as others of her kind,
That, far from human neighbourhood,
Range unrestricted as the wind,
Through park, or chase, or savage wood.
  But see the consecrated Maid
Emerging from a cedar shade
To open moonshine, where the Doe
Beneath the cypress-spire is laid;
Like a patch of April snow—
Upon a bed of herbage green,
Lingering in a woody glade
Or behind a rocky screen—
Lonely relic! which, if seen
By the shepherd, is passed by
With an inattentive eye.
Nor more regard doth She bestow
Upon the uncomplaining Doe
Now couched at ease, though oft this day
Not unperplexed nor free from pain,
When she had tried, and tried in vain,
Approaching in her gentle way,
To win some look of love, or gain
Encouragement to sport or play
Attempts which still the heart-sick Maid
Rejected, or with slight repaid.
  Yet Emily is soothed;—the breeze
Came fraught with kindly sympathies.
As she approached yon rustic Shed
Hung with late-flowering woodbine, spread
Along the walls and overhead,
The fragrance of the breathing flowers
Revived a memory of those hours
When here, in this remote alcove,
(While from the pendent woodbine came
Like odours, sweet as if the same)
A fondly-anxious Mother strove
To teach her salutary fears
And mysteries above her years.
Yes, she is soothed: an Image faint,
And yet not faint—a presence bright
Returns to her—that blessèd Saint
Who with mild looks and language mild
Instructed here her darling Child,
While yet a prattler on the knee,
To worship in simplicity
The invisible God, and take for guide
The faith reformed and purified.
  'Tis flown—the Vision, and the sense
Of that beguiling influence,
"But oh! thou Angel from above,
Mute Spirit of maternal love,
That stood'st before my eyes, more clear
Than ghosts are fabled to appear
Sent upon embassies of fear;
As thou thy presence hast to me
Vouchsafed, in radiant ministry
Descend on Francis; nor forbear
To greet him with a voice, and say;—
'If hope be a rejected stay,
'Do thou, my christian Son, beware
'Of that most lamentable snare,
'The self-reliance of despair!'"
  Then from within the embowered retreat
Where she had found a grateful seat
Perturbed she issues. She will go!
Herself will follow to the war,
And clasp her Father's knees;—ah, no!
She meets the insuperable bar,
The injunction by her Brother laid;
His parting charge—but ill obeyed—
That interdicted all debate,
All prayer for this cause or for that;
All efforts that would turn aside
The headstrong current of their fate:
Her duty is to stand and wait;
In resignation to abide
The shock, AND FINALLY SECURE
O'ER PAIN AND GRIEF A TRIUMPH PURE.
—She feels it, and her pangs are checked.

But now, as silently she paced
The turf, and thought by thought was chased,
Came One who, with sedate respect,
Approached, and, greeting her, thus spake;
"An old man's privilege I take:
Dark is the time—a woeful day!
Dear daughter of affliction, say
How can I serve you? point the way."
"Rights have you, and may well be bold;
You with my Father have grown old
In friendship—strive—for his sake go—
Turn from us all the coming woe:
This would I beg; but on my mind
A passive stillness is enjoined.
On you, if room for mortal aid
Be left, is no restriction laid;
You not forbidden to recline
With hope upon the Will divine."
"Hope," said the old Man, "must abide
With all of us, whate'er betide.
In Craven's Wilds is many a den,
To shelter persecuted men:
Far under ground is many a cave,
Where they might lie as in the grave,
Until this storm hath ceased to rave:
Or let them cross the River Tweed,
And be at once from peril freed!"
"Ah tempt me not!" she faintly sighed;
"I will not counsel nor exhort,
With my condition satisfied;
But you, at least, may make report
Of what befalls;—be this your task—
This may be done;—'tis all I ask!"
She spake—and from the Lady's sight
The Sire, unconscious of his age,
Departed promptly as a Page
Bound on some errand of delight.
—The noble Francis—wise as brave,
Thought he, may want not skill to save.
With hopes in tenderness concealed,
Unarmed he followed to the field;
Him will I seek: the insurgent Powers
Are now besieging Barnard's Towers,—
"Grant that the Moon which shines this night
May guide them in a prudent flight!"
But quick the turns of chance and change,
And knowledge has a narrow range;
Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain.—
The Moon may shine, but cannot be
Their guide in flight—already she
Hath witnessed their captivity.
She saw the desperate assault
Upon that hostile castle made;—
But dark and dismal is the vault
Where Norton and his sons are laid!
Disastrous issue!—he had said
"This night yon faithless Towers must yield,
Or we for ever quit the field.
—Neville is utterly dismayed,
For promise fails of Howard's aid;
And Dacre to our call replies
That *he* is unprepared to rise.
My heart is sick;—this weary pause
Must needs be fatal to our cause.
The breach is open—on the wall,
This night, the Banner shall be planted!"
—'Twas done: his Sons were with him—all;
They belt him round with hearts undaunted
And others follow;—Sire and Son
Leap down into the court;—"'Tis won"—
They shout aloud—but Heaven decreed
That with their joyful shout should close
The triumph of a desperate deed
Which struck with terror friends and foes!
The friend shrinks back—the foe recoils
From Norton and his filial band;
But they, now caught within the toils,
Against a thousand cannot stand;—
The foe from numbers courage drew,
And overpowered that gallant few.
"A rescue for the Standard!" cried
The Father from within the walls;
But, see, the sacred Standard falls!—
Confusion through the Camp spread wide:
Some fled; and some their fears detained:
But ere the Moon had sunk to rest
In her pale chambers of the west,
Of that rash levy nought remained.

CANTO FIFTH

HIGH on a point of rugged ground
Among the wastes of Rylstone Fell
Above the loftiest ridge or mound
Where foresters or shepherds dwell,
An edifice of warlike frame
Stands single—Norton Tower its name—[1]
It fronts all quarters, and looks round
O'er path and road, and plain and dell,

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[1] See Note.

Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream,
Upon a prospect without bound.
The summit of this bold ascent—
Though bleak and bare, and seldom free
As Pendle-hill or Pennygent
From wind, or frost, or vapours wet—
Had often heard the sound of glee
When there the youthful Nortons met,
To practise games and archery:
How proud and happy they! the crowd
Of Lookers-on how pleased and proud!
And from the scorching noon-tide sun,
From showers, or when the prize was won,
They to the Tower withdrew, and there
Would mirth run round, with generous fare;
And the stern old Lord of Rylstone-hall
Was happiest, proudest, of them all!
But now, his Child, with anguish pale,
Upon the height walks to and fro;
'Tis well that she hath heard the tale,
Received the bitterness of woe:
For she *had* hoped, had hoped and feared,
Such rights did feeble nature claim;
And oft her steps had hither steered,
Though not unconscious of self-blame;
For she her brother's charge revered,
His farewell words; and by the same,
Yea by her brother's very name,
Had, in her solitude, been cheered.
Beside the lonely watch-tower stood
That grey-haired Man of gentle blood,
Who with her Father had grown old
In friendship; rival hunters they,
And fellow warriors in their day;
To Rylstone he the tidings brought;
Then on this height the Maid had sought,
And, gently as he could, had told
The end of that dire Tragedy,
Which it had been his lot to see.
To him the Lady turned; "You said
That Francis lives, *he* is not dead?"
"Your noble brother hath been spared;
To take his life they have not dared;
On him and on his high endeavour
The light of praise shall shine for ever!
Nor did he (such Heaven's will) in vain
His solitary course maintain;
Not vainly struggled in the might
Of duty, seeing with clear sight;
He was their comfort to the last,
Their joy till every pang was past.
I witnessed when to York they came—
What, Lady, if their feet were tied;
They might deserve a good Man's blame;
But marks of infamy and shame—
These were their triumph, these their pride;
Nor wanted 'mid the pressing crowd
Deep feeling, that found utterance loud,
'Lo, Francis comes,' there were who cried,
'A Prisoner once, but now set free!
'Tis well, for he the worst defied
Through force of natural piety;
He rose not in this quarrel; he,
For concord's sake and England's good,
Suit to his Brothers often made
With tears, and of his Father prayed—
And when he had in vain withstood
Their purpose—then did he divide,
He parted from them; but at their side
Now walks in unanimity.
Then peace to cruelty and scorn,
While to the prison they are borne,
Peace, peace to all indignity!'
And so in Prison were they laid—
Oh hear me, hear me, gentle Maid,
For I am come with power to bless,
By scattering gleams, through your distress,
Of a redeeming happiness.
Me did a reverent pity move
And privilege of ancient love;
And, in your service, making bold,
Entrance I gained to that stronghold.
Your Father gave me cordial greeting;
But to his purposes, that burned
Within him, instantly returned:
He was commanding and entreating,
And said—'We need not stop, my Son!
Thoughts press, and time is hurrying on'—
And so to Francis he renewed
His words, more calmly thus pursued.
'Might this our enterprise have sped,
Change wide and deep the Land had seen,
A renovation from the dead,
A spring-tide of immortal green:
The darksome altars would have blazed
Like stars when clouds are rolled away;
Salvation to all eyes that gazed,
Once more the Rood had been upraised
To spread its arms, and stand for aye.
Then, then—had I survived to see
New life in Bolton Priory;
The voice restored, the eye of Truth
Re-opened that inspired my youth;
To see her in her pomp arrayed—
This Banner (for such vow I made)
Should on the consecrated breast
Of that same Temple have found rest:

I would myself have hung it high,
Fit offering of glad victory!
  A shadow of such thought remains
To cheer this sad and pensive time;
A solemn fancy yet sustains
One feeble Being—bids me climb
Even to the last—one effort more
To attest my Faith, if not restore.
  Hear then,' said he, 'while I impart,
My Son, the last wish of my heart.
The Banner strive thou to regain;
And, if the endeavour prove not vain,
Bear it—to whom if not to thee
Shall I this lonely thought consign?—
Bear it to Bolton Priory,
And lay it on Saint Mary's shrine;
To wither in the sun and breeze
'Mid those decaying sanctities.
There let at least the gift be laid,
The testimony there displayed;
Bold proof that with no selfish aim,
But for lost Faith and Christ's dear name,
I helmeted a brow though white,
And took a place in all men's sight;
Yea offered up this noble Brood,
This fair unrivalled Brotherhood,
And turned away from thee, my Son!
And left—but be the rest unsaid,
The name untouched, the tear unshed;—
My wish is known, and I have done:
Now promise, grant this one request,
This dying prayer, and be thou blest!'
  Then Francis answered—'Trust thy Son,
For, with God's will, it shall be done!'—
  The pledge obtained, the solemn word
Thus scarcely given, a noise was heard,
And Officers appeared in state
To lead the prisoners to their fate.
They rose, oh! wherefore should I fear
To tell, or, Lady, you to hear?
They rose—embraces none were given—
They stood like trees when earth and heaven
Are calm; they knew each other's worth,
And reverently the Band went forth.
They met, when they had reached the door,
One with profane and harsh intent
Placed there—that he might go before
And, with that rueful Banner borne
Aloft in sign of taunting scorn,
Conduct them to their punishment:
So cruel Sussex, unrestrained
By human feeling, had ordained.
The unhappy Banner Francis saw,
And, with a look of calm command
Inspiring universal awe,
He took it from the soldier's hand;
And all the people that stood round
Confirmed the deed in peace profound.
—High transport did the Father shed
Upon his Son—and they were led,
Led on, and yielded up their breath;
Together died, a happy death!—
But Francis, soon as he had braved
That insult, and the Banner saved,
Athwart the unresisting tide
Of the spectators occupied
In admiration or dismay,
Bore instantly his Charge away."
  These things, which thus had in the sight
And hearing passed of Him who stood
With Emily, on the Watch-tower height,
In Rylstone's woeful neighbourhood,
He told; and oftentimes with voice
Of power to comfort or rejoice;
For deepest sorrows that aspire,
Go high, no transport ever higher.
"Yes—God is rich in mercy," said
The old Man to the silent Maid,
"Yet, Lady! shines, through this black night,
One star of aspect heavenly bright;
Your Brother lives—he lives—is come
Perhaps already to his home;
Then let us leave this dreary place."
She yielded, and with gentle pace,
Though without one uplifted look,
To Rylstone-hall her way she took.

Canto Sixth

Why comes not Francis?—From the doleful City
He fled,—and, in his flight, could hear
The death-sounds of the Minster-bell:
That sullen stroke pronounced farewell
To Marmaduke, cut off from pity!
To Ambrose that! and then a knell
For him, the sweet half-opened Flower!
For all—all dying in one hour!
—Why comes not Francis? Thoughts of love
Should bear him to his Sister dear
With the fleet motion of a dove;
Yea, like a heavenly messenger
Of speediest wing, should he appear.
Why comes he not?—for westward fast
Along the plain of York he past;

Reckless of what impels or leads,
Unchecked he hurries on ;—nor heeds
The sorrow, through the Villages,
Spread by triumphant cruelties
Of vengeful military force,
And punishment without remorse.
He marked not, heard not, as he fled
All but the suffering heart was dead
For him abandoned to blank awe,
To vacancy, and horror strong :
And the first object which he saw,
With conscious sight, as he swept along—
It was the Banner in his hand !
He felt—and made a sudden stand.
  He looked about like one betrayed :
What hath he done? what promise made?
Oh weak, weak moment ! to what end
Can such a vain oblation tend,
And he the Bearer?—Can he go
Carrying this instrument of woe,
And find, find anywhere, a right
To excuse him in his Country's sight?
No ; will not all men deem the change
A downward course, perverse and strange?
Here is it ;—but how? when? must she,
The unoffending Emily,
Again this piteous object see?
  Such conflict long did he maintain,
Nor liberty nor rest could gain :
His own life into danger brought
By this sad burden—even that thought,
Exciting self-suspicion strong
Swayed the brave man to his wrong.
And how—unless it were the sense
Of all-disposing Providence,
Its will unquestionably shown—
How has the Banner clung so fast
To a palsied, and unconscious hand ;
Clung to the hand to which it passed
Without impediment? And why,
But that Heaven's purpose might be known,
Doth now no hindrance meet his eye,
No intervention, to withstand
Fulfilment of a Father's prayer
Breathed to a Son forgiven, and blest
When all resentments were at rest,
And life in death laid the heart bare?—
Then, like a spectre sweeping by,
Rushed through his mind the prophecy
Of utter desolation made
To Emily in the yew-tree shade :
He sighed, submitting will and power
To the stern embrace of that grasping hour.
'No choice is left, the deed is mine—
Dead are they, dead !—and I will go,
And, for their sakes, come weal or woe,
Will lay the Relic on the shrine."
  So forward with a steady will
He went, and traversed plain and hill ;
And up the vale of Wharf his way
Pursued ;—and, at the dawn of day,
Attained a summit whence his eyes
Could see the Tower of Bolton rise.
There Francis for a moment's space
Made halt—but hark ! a noise behind
Of horsemen at an eager pace !
He heard, and with misgiving mind.
—'Tis Sir George Bowes who leads the Band :
They come, by cruel Sussex sent ;
Who, when the Nortons from the hand
Of death had drunk their punishment,
Bethought him, angry and ashamed,
How Francis, with the Banner claimed
As his own charge, had disappeared,
By all the standers-by revered.
His whole bold carriage (which had quelled
Thus far the Opposer, and repelled
All censure, enterprise so bright
That even bad men had vainly striven
Against that overcoming light)
Was then reviewed, and prompt word given.
That to what place soever fled
He should be seized, alive or dead.
  The troop of horse have gained the height
Where Francis stood in open sight.
They hem him round—"Behold the proof"
They cried, "the Ensign in his hand !
He did not arm, he walked aloof !
For why?—to save his Father's land ;—
Worst Traitor of them all is he,
A Traitor dark and cowardly !"
  "I am no Traitor," Francis said,
"Though this unhappy freight I bear ;
And must not part with. But beware ;—
Err not by hasty zeal misled,
Nor do a suffering Spirit wrong,
Whose self-reproaches are too strong !"
At this he from the beaten road
Retreated towards a brake of thorn,
That like a place of vantage showed ;
And there stood bravely, though forlorn.
In self-defence with warlike brow
He stood,—nor weaponless was now ;
He from a Soldier's hand had snatched
A spear,—and, so protected, watched
The Assailants, turning round and round ;
But from behind with treacherous wound

A Spearman brought him to the ground.
The guardian lance, as Francis fell,
Dropped from him; but his other hand
The Banner clenched; till, from out the Band,
One, the most eager for the prize,
Rushed in; and—while, O grief to tell!
A glimmering sense still left, with eyes
Unclosed the noble Francis lay—
Seized it, as hunters seize their prey;
But not before the warm life-blood
Had tinged more deeply, as it flowed,
The wounds the broidered Banner showed,
Thy fatal work, O Maiden, innocent as good!
Proudly the Horsemen bore away
The Standard; and where Francis lay
There was he left alone, unwept,
And for two days unnoticed slept.
For at that time bewildering fear
Possessed the country, far and near;
But, on the third day, passing by
One of the Norton Tenantry
Espied the uncovered Corse; the Man
Shrunk as he recognised the face,
And to the nearest homesteads ran
And called the people to the place.
—How desolate is Rylstone-hall!
This was the instant thought of all;
And if the lonely Lady there
Should be; to her they cannot bear
This weight of anguish and despair.
So, when upon sad thoughts had prest
Thoughts sadder still, they deemed it best
That, if the Priest should yield assent
And no one hinder their intent,
Then, they, for Christian pity's sake,
In holy ground a grave would make;
And straightway buried he should be
In the Churchyard of the Priory.
Apart, some little space, was made
The grave where Francis must be laid.
In no confusion or neglect
This did they,—but in pure respect
That he was born of gentle blood;
And that there was no neighbourhood
Of kindred for him in that ground:
So to the Churchyard they are bound,
Bearing the body on a bier;
And psalms they sing—a holy sound
That hill and vale with sadness hear.
But Emily hath raised her head,
And is again disquieted;
She must behold!—so many gone,
Where is the solitary One?
And forth from Rylstone-hall stepped she,—
To seek her Brother forth she went,
And tremblingly her course she bent
Toward Bolton's ruined Priory.
She comes, and in the vale hath heard
The funeral dirge;—she sees the knot
Of people, sees them in one spot—
And darting like a wounded bird
She reached the grave, and with her breast
Upon the ground received the rest,—
The consummation, the whole ruth
And sorrow of this final truth!

CANTO SEVENTH

> "Powers there are
> That touch each other to the quick—in modes
> Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive.
> No soul to dream of."

THOU Spirit, whose angelic hand
Was to the harp a strong command,
Called the submissive strings to wake
In glory for this Maiden's sake,
Say, Spirit! whither hath she fled
To hide her poor afflicted head?
What mighty forest in its gloom
Enfolds her?—is a rifted tomb
Within the wilderness her seat?
Some island which the wild waves beat—
Is that the Sufferer's last retreat?
Or some aspiring rock, that shrouds
Its perilous front in mists and clouds?
High-climbing rock, low sunless dale,
Sea, desert, what do these avail?
Oh take her anguish and her fears
Into a deep recess of years!
'Tis done;—despoil and desolation
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown;[1]
Pools, terraces, and walks are sown
With weeds; the bowers are overthrown,
Or have given way to slow mutation,
While, in their ancient habitation
The Norton name hath been unknown.
The lordly Mansion of its pride
Is stripped; the ravage hath spread wide
Through park and field, a perishing
That mocks the gladness of the Spring!
And, with this silent gloom agreeing,
Appears a joyless human Being,
Of aspect such as if the waste
Were under her dominion placed.
Upon a primrose bank, her throne

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[1] See Note.

Of quietness, she sits alone;
Among the ruins of a wood,
Erewhile a covert bright and green,
And where full many a brave tree stood,
That used to spread its boughs, and ring
With the sweet bird's carolling.
Behold her, like a virgin Queen,
Neglecting in imperial state
These outward images of fate,
And carrying inward a serene
And perfect sway, through many a thought
Of chance and change, that hath been brought
To the subjection of a holy,
Though stern and rigorous, melancholy!
The like authority, with grace
Of awfulness, is in her face,—
There hath she fixed it; yet it seems
To o'ershadow by no native right
That face, which cannot lose the gleams,
Lose utterly the tender gleams,
Of gentleness and meek delight,
And loving-kindness ever bright:
Such is her sovereign mien:—her dress
(A vest with woollen cincture tied,
A hood of mountain-wool undyed)
Is homely,—fashioned to express
A wandering Pilgrim's humbleness.
And she *hath* wandered, long and far,
Beneath the light of sun and star;
Hath roamed in trouble and in grief,
Driven forward like a withered leaf,
Yea like a ship at random blown
To distant places and unknown.
But now she dares to seek a haven
Among her native wilds of Craven;
Hath seen again her Father's roof,
And put her fortitude to proof;
The mighty sorrow hath been borne,
And she is thoroughly forlorn:
Her soul doth in itself stand fast,
Sustained by memory of the past
And strength of Reason; held above
The infirmities of mortal love;
Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
And awfully impenetrable.
And so—beneath a mouldered tree,
A self-surviving leafless oak
By unregarded age from stroke
Of ravage saved—sate Emily.
There did she rest, with head reclined,
Herself most like a stately flower,
(Such have I seen) whom chance of birth
Hath separated from its kind,
To live and die in a shady bower,
Single on the gladsome earth.
When, with a noise like distant thunder,
A troop of deer came sweeping by;
And, suddenly, behold a wonder!
For One, among those rushing deer,
A single One, in mid career
Hath stopped, and fixed her large full eye
Upon the Lady Emily;
A Doe most beautiful, clear-white,
A radiant creature, silver-bright!
Thus checked, a little while it stayed;
A little thoughtful pause it made;
And then advanced with stealth-like pace,
Drew softly near her, and more near—
Looked round—but saw no cause for fear;
So to her feet the Creature came,
And laid its head upon her knee,
And looked into the Lady's face,
A look of pure benignity,
And fond unclouded memory.
It is, thought Emily, the same,
The very Doe of other years!—
The pleading look the Lady viewed,
And, by her gushing thoughts subdued,
She melted into tears—
A flood of tears, that flowed apace,
Upon the happy Creature's face.
Oh, moment ever blest! O Pair
Beloved of Heaven, Heaven's chosen care,
This was for you a precious greeting;
And may it prove a fruitful meeting!
Joined are they, and the sylvan Doe
Can she depart? can she forego
The Lady, once her playful peer,
And now her sainted Mistress dear?
And will not Emily receive
This lovely chronicler of things
Long past, delights and sorrowings?
Lone Sufferer! will not she believe
The promise in that speaking face;
And welcome, as a gift of grace,
The saddest thought the Creature brings?
That day, the first of a re-union
Which was to teem with high communion,
That day of balmy April weather,
They tarried in the wood together.
And when, ere fall of evening dew,
She from her sylvan haunt withdrew,
The White Doe tracked with faithful pace
The Lady to her dwelling-place;
That nook where, on paternal ground,
A habitation she had found,
The Master of whose humble board

Once owned her Father for his Lord;
A hut, by tufted trees defended,
Where Rylstone brook with Wharf is blended.
When Emily by morning light
Went forth, the Doe stood there in sight.
She shrunk:—with one frail shock of pain
Received and followed by a prayer,
She saw the Creature once again;
Shun will she not, she feels, will bear;—
But, wheresoever she looked round,
All now was trouble-haunted ground;
And therefore now she deems it good
Once more this restless neighbourhood
To leave.—Unwooed, yet unforbidden,
The White Doe followed up the vale,
Up to another cottage, hidden
In the deep fork of Amerdale;[1]
And there may Emily restore
Herself, in spots unseen before.
—Why tell of mossy rock, or tree,
By lurking Dernbrook's pathless side,
Haunts of a strengthening amity
That calmed her, cheered, and fortified?
For she hath ventured now to read
Of time, and place, and thought, and deed—
Endless history that lies
In her silent Follower's eyes;
Who with a power like human reason
Discerns the favourable season,
Skilled to approach or to retire,—
From looks conceiving her desire;
From look, deportment, voice, or mien,
That vary to the heart within.
If she too passionately wreathed
Her arms, or over-deeply breathed,
Walked quick or slowly, every mood
In its degree was understood;
Then well may their accord be true,
And kindliest intercourse ensue.
—Oh! surely 'twas a gentle rousing
When she by sudden glimpse espied
The White Doe on the mountain browsing,
Or in the meadow wandered wide!
How pleased, when down the Straggler sank
Beside her, on some sunny bank!
How soothed, when in thick bower enclosed,
They, like a nested pair, reposed!
Fair Vision! when it crossed the Maid
Within some rocky cavern laid,
The dark cave's portal gliding by,
White as whitest cloud on high
Floating through the azure sky.
—What now is left for pain or fear?
That Presence, dearer and more dear,
While they, side by side, were straying,
And the shepherd's pipe was playing,
Did now a very gladness yield
At morning to the dewy field,
And with a deeper peace endued
The hour of moonlight solitude.
With her Companion, in such frame
Of mind, to Rylstone back she came;
And, ranging through the wasted groves,
Received the memory of old loves,
Undisturbed and undistrest,
Into a soul which now was blest
With a soft spring-day of holy,
Mild, and grateful, melancholy:
Not sunless gloom or unenlightened,
But by tender fancies brightened.
When the bells of Rylstone played
Their sabbath music—"God us ayde!"
That was the sound they seemed to speak;
Inscriptive legend which I ween
May on those holy bells be seen,
That legend and her Grandsire's name;
And oftentimes the Lady meek
Had in her childhood read the same;
Words which she slighted at that day;
But now, when such sad change was wrought,
And of that lonely name she thought—
The bells of Rylstone seemed to say,
While she sate listening in the shade,
With vocal music, "God us ayde;"
And all the hills were glad to bear
Their part in this effectual prayer.
Nor lacked she Reason's firmest power;
But with the White Doe at her side
Up would she climb to Norton Tower,
And thence look round her far and wide,
Her fate there measuring;—all is stilled,—
The weak One hath subdued her heart;
Behold the prophecy fulfilled,
Fulfilled, and she sustains her part!
But here her Brother's words have failed;
Here hath a milder doom prevailed;
That she, of him and all bereft,
Hath yet this faithful Partner left;
This one Associate, that disproves
His words, remains for her, and loves.
If tears are shed, they do not fall
For loss of him—for one, or all;
Yet, sometimes, sometimes doth she weep
Moved gently in her soul's soft sleep;

[1] See Note.

A few tears down her cheek descend
For this her last and living Friend.
  Bless, tender Hearts, their mutual lot,
And bless for both this savage spot;
Which Emily doth sacred hold
For reasons dear and manifold—
Here hath she, here before her sight,
Close to the summit of this height,
The grassy rock-encircled Pound[1]
In which the Creature first was found.
So beautiful the timid Thrall
(A spotless Youngling white as foam)
Her youngest Brother brought it home;
The youngest, then a lusty boy,
Bore it, or led, to Rylstone-hall
With heart brimful of pride and joy!
  But most to Bolton's sacred Pile,
On favouring nights, she loved to go;
There ranged through cloister, court, and aisle,
Attended by the soft-paced Doe;
Nor feared she in the still moonshine
To look upon Saint Mary's shrine;
Nor on the lonely turf that showed
Where Francis slept in his last abode.
For that she came; there oft she sate
Forlorn, but not disconsolate:
And, when she from the abyss returned
Of thought, she neither shrunk nor mourned;
Was happy that she lived to greet
Her mute Companion as it lay
In love and pity at her feet;
How happy in its turn to meet
The recognition! the mild glance
Beamed from that gracious countenance;
Communication, like the ray
Of a new morning, to the nature
And prospects of the inferior Creature!
  A mortal Song we sing, by dower
Encouraged of celestial power;
Power which the viewless Spirit shed
By whom we were first visited;
Whose voice we heard, whose hand and wings
Swept like a breeze the conscious strings,
When, left in solitude, erewhile
We stood before this ruined Pile,
And, quitting unsubstantial dreams,
Sang in this Presence kindred themes;
Distress and desolation spread
Through human hearts, and pleasure dead,—
Dead—but to live again on earth,
A second and yet nobler birth;
Dire overthrow, and yet how high
The re-ascent in sanctity!
From fair to fairer; day by day
A more divine and loftier way!
Even such this blessèd Pilgrim trod,
By sorrow lifted towards her God;
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed mortality.
Her own thoughts loved she; and could bend
A dear look to her lowly Friend;
There stopped; her thirst was satisfied
With what this innocent spring supplied:
Her sanction inwardly she bore,
And stood apart from human cares:
But to the world returned no more,
Although with no unwilling mind
Help did she give at need, and joined
The Wharfdale peasants in their prayers.
At length, thus faintly, faintly tied
To earth, she was set free, and died.
Thy soul, exalted Emily,
Maid of the blasted family,
Rose to the God from whom it came!
—In Rylstone Church her mortal frame
Was buried by her Mother's side.
  Most glorious sunset! and a ray
Survives—the twilight of this day—
In that fair Creature whom the fields
Support, and whom the forest shields;
Who, having filled a holy place,
Partakes, in her degree, Heaven's grace;
And bears a memory and a mind
Raised far above the law of kind;
Haunting the spots with lonely cheer
Which her dear Mistress once held dear:
Loves most what Emily loved most—
The enclosure of this churchyard ground;
Here wanders like a gliding ghost,
And every sabbath here is found;
Comes with the people when the bells
Are heard among the moorland dells,
Finds entrance through yon arch, where way
Lies open on the sabbath-day;
Here walks amid the mournful waste
Of prostrate altars, shrines defaced,
And floors encumbered with rich show
Of fret-work imagery laid low;
Paces softly, or makes halt,
By fractured cell, or tomb, or vault;
By plate of monumental brass
Dim-gleaming among weeds and grass,

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[1] See Note.

And sculptured Forms of Warriors brave:
But chiefly by that single grave,
That one sequestered hillock green,
The pensive visitant is seen.
There doth the gentle Creature lie
With those adversities unmoved;
Calm spectacle, by earth and sky
In their benignity approved!
And aye, methinks, this hoary Pile,
Subdued by outrage and decay,
Looks down upon her with a smile,
A gracious smile, that seems to say—
"Thou, thou art not a Child of Time,
But Daughter of the Eternal Prime!"
1807.

THE FORCE OF PRAYER;[1]

OR,

THE FOUNDING OF BOLTON PRIORY

A TRADITION

An Appendage to the "White Doe." My friend, Mr. Rogers, has also written on the subject. The story is preserved in Dr. Whitaker's *History of Craven*—a topographical writer of first-rate merit in all that concerns the past; but such was his aversion from the modern spirit, as shown in the spread of manufactories in those districts of which he treats, that his readers are left entirely ignorant both of the progress of these arts and their real bearing upon the comfort, virtues, and happiness of the inhabitants. While wandering on foot through the fertile valleys and over the moorlands of the Apennine that divides Yorkshire from Lancashire, I used to be delighted with observing the number of substantial cottages that had sprung up on every side, each having its little plot of fertile ground won from the surrounding waste. A bright and warm fire, if needed, was always to be found in these dwellings. The father was at his loom; the children looked healthy and happy. Is it not to be feared that the increase of mechanic power has done away with many of these blessings, and substituted many evils? Alas! if these evils grow, how are they to be checked, and where is the remedy to be found? Political economy will not supply it; that is certain, we must look to something deeper, purer, and higher.

"What is good for a bootless bene?"
With these dark words begins my Tale;
And their meaning is, whence can comfort spring
When Prayer is of no avail?

"What is good for a bootless bene?"
The Falconer to the Lady said;
And she made answer "ENDLESS SORROW!"
For she knew that her Son was dead.

She knew it by the Falconer's words,
And from the look of the Falconer's eye,
And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly.

—Young Romilly through Barden woods
Is ranging high and low;
And holds a greyhound in a leash,
To let slip upon buck or doe.

The pair have reached that fearful chasm,
How tempting to bestride!
For lordly Wharf is there pent in
With rocks on either side.

This striding-place is called THE STRID,
A name which it took of yore:
A thousand years hath it borne that name,
And shall a thousand more.

And hither is young Romilly come,
And what may now forbid
That he, perhaps for the hundredth time,
Shall bound across THE STRID?

He sprang in glee,—for what cared he
That the river was strong, and the rocks were steep?—
But the greyhound in the leash hung back,
And checked him in his leap.

The Boy is in the arms of Wharf,
And strangled by a merciless force;
For never more was young Romilly seen
Till he rose a lifeless corse.

Now there is stillness in the vale,
And long, unspeaking, sorrow:
Wharf shall be to pitying hearts
A name more sad than Yarrow.

If for a lover the Lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death, and from the passion of death;—
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the wedding-day
Which was to be to-morrow:
Her hope was a further-looking hope,
And hers is a mother's sorrow.

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[1] See the "White Doe of Rylstone."

He was a tree that stood alone,
And proudly did its branches wave;
And the root of this delightful tree
Was in her husband's grave!

Long, long in darkness did she sit,
And her first words were, "Let there be
In Bolton, on the field of Wharf,
A stately Priory!"

The stately Priory was reared;
And Wharf, as he moved along,
To matins joined a mournful voice,
Nor failed at evensong.

And the Lady prayed in heaviness
That looked not for relief!
But slowly did her succour come,
And a patience to her grief.

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our friend! 1807.

COMPOSED WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS ENGAGED IN WRITING A TRACT OCCASIONED BY THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA

Not 'mid the world's vain objects that enslave
The free-born Soul—that World whose vaunted skill
In selfish interest perverts the will,
Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave—
Not there; but in dark wood and rocky cave,
And hollow vale which foaming torrents fill
With omnipresent murmur as they rave
Down their steep beds, that never shall be still:
Here, mighty Nature! in this school sublime
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain;
For her consult the auguries of time,
And through the human heart explore my way;
And look and listen—gathering, whence I may,
Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can restrain. 1808.

COMPOSED AT THE SAME TIME AND ON THE SAME OCCASION

I dropped my pen; and listened to the Wind
That sang of trees uptorn and vessels tost—
A midnight harmony; and wholly lost
To the general sense of men by chains confined
Of business, care, or pleasure; or resigned
To timely sleep. Thought I, the impassioned strain,
Which, without aid of numbers, I sustain,
Like acceptation from the World will find.
Yet some with apprehensive ear shall drink
A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past;
And to the attendant promise will give heed—
The prophecy,—like that of this wild blast,
Which, while it makes the heart with sadness shrink,
Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed. 1808.

GEORGE AND SARAH GREEN

Who weeps for strangers? Many wept
For George and Sarah Green;
Wept for that pair's unhappy fate,
Whose grave may here be seen.

By night, upon these stormy fells,
Did wife and husband roam;
Six little ones at home had left,
And could not find that home.

For *any* dwelling-place of man
As vainly did they seek.
He perish'd; and a voice was heard—
The widow's lonely shriek.

Not many steps, and she was left
A body without life—
A few short steps were the chain that bound
The husband to the wife.

Now do those sternly-featured hills
Look gently on this grave;
And quiet now are the depths of air,
As a sea without a wave.

But deeper lies the heart of peace
In quiet more profound;
The heart of quietness is here
Within this churchyard bound.

And from all agony of mind
It keeps them safe, and far
From fear and grief, and from all need
Of sun or guiding star.

O darkness of the grave! how deep,
After that living night—
That last and dreary living one
Of sorrow and affright?

O sacred marriage-bed of death,
That keeps them side by side
In bond of peace, in bond of love,
That may not be untied!

1808.

HOFFER

Of mortal parents is the Hero born
By whom the undaunted Tyrolese are led?
Or is it Tell's great Spirit, from the dead
Returned to animate an age forlorn?
He comes like Phœbus through the gates of morn
When dreary darkness is discomfited,
Yet mark his modest state! upon his head,
That simple crest, a heron's plume, is worn.
O Liberty! they stagger at the shock
From van to rear—and with one mind would flee,
But half their host is buried:—rock on rock
Descends:—beneath this godlike Warrior, see!
Hills, torrents, woods, embodied to bemock
The Tyrant, and confound his cruelty.

1809.

"ADVANCE—COME FORTH FROM THY TYROLEAN GROUND"

Advance—come forth from thy Tyrolean ground,
Dear Liberty! stern Nymph of soul untamed;
Sweet Nymph, O rightly of the mountains named!
Through the long chain of Alps from mound to mound
And o'er the eternal snows, like Echo, bound;
Like Echo, when the hunter train at dawn
Have roused her from her sleep: and forest-lawn,
Cliffs, woods and caves, her viewless steps resound
And babble of her pastime!—On, dread Power!
With such invisible motion speed thy flight,
Through hanging clouds, from craggy height to height,
Through the green vales and through the herdsman's bower—
That all the Alps may gladden in thy might,
Here, there, and in all places at one hour.

1809.

FEELINGS OF THE TYROLESE

The Land we from our fathers had in trust,
And to our children will transmit, or die:
This is our maxim, this our piety;
And God and Nature say that it is just.
That which we *would* perform in arms—we must!
We read the dictate in the infant's eye;
In the wife's smile; and in the placid sky;
And, at our feet, amid the silent dust
Of them that were before us.—Sing aloud
Old songs, the precious music of the heart!
Give, herds and flocks, your voices to the wind!
While we go forth, a self-devoted crowd,
With weapons grasped in fearless hands, to assert
Our virtue, and to vindicate mankind.

1809.

"ALAS! WHAT BOOTS THE LONG LABORIOUS QUEST"

Alas! what boots the long laborious quest
Of moral prudence, sought through good and ill;
Or pains abstruse—to elevate the will,
And lead us on to that transcendent rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason, seated on her sovereign hill;

What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie deprest,
Beneath the brutal sword?—Her haughty Schools
Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow say—
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride of intellect and thought?
1809.

"AND IS IT AMONG RUDE UNTUTORED DALES"

AND is it among rude untutored Dales,
There, and there only, that the heart is true?
And, rising to repel or to subdue,
Is it by rocks and woods that man prevails?
Ah no! though Nature's dread protection fails,
There is a bulwark in the soul. This knew
Iberian Burghers when the sword they drew
In Zaragoza, naked to the gales
Of fiercely-breathing war. The truth was felt
By Palafox, and many a brave compeer,
Like him of noble birth and noble mind;
By ladies, meek-eyed women without fear;
And wanderers of the street, to whom is dealt
The bread which without industry they find.
1809.

"O'ER THE WIDE EARTH, ON MOUNTAIN AND ON PLAIN"

O'ER the wide earth, on mountain and on plain,
Dwells in the affections and the soul of man
A Godhead, like the universal PAN;
But more exalted, with a brighter train:
And shall his bounty be dispensed in vain,
Showered equally on city and on field,
And neither hope nor steadfast promise yield
In these usurping times of fear and pain?
Such doom awaits us. Nay, forbid it Heaven!
We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death:—else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality?
1809.

ON THE FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE TYROLESE

IT was a *moral* end for which they fought;
Else how, when mighty Thrones were put to shame,
Could they, poor Shepherds, have preserved an aim,
A resolution, or enlivening thought?
Nor hath that moral good been *vainly* sought;
For in their magnanimity and fame
Powers have they left, an impulse, and a claim
Which neither can be overturned nor bought.
Sleep, Warriors, sleep! among your hills repose!
We know that ye, beneath the stern control
Of awful prudence, keep the unvanquished soul:
And when, impatient of her guilt and woes,
Europe breaks forth; then, Shepherds! shall ye rise
For perfect triumph o'er your Enemies.
1809

"HAIL, ZARAGOZA! IF WITH UNWET EYE"[1]

HAIL, Zaragoza! If with unwet eye
We can approach, thy sorrow to behold,
Yet is the heart not pitiless nor cold;
Such spectacle demands not tear or sigh.
These desolate remains are trophies high
Of more than martial courage in the breast
Of peaceful civic virtue: they attest
Thy matchless worth to all posterity.
Blood flowed before thy sight without remorse;
Disease consumed thy vitals; War upheaved
The ground beneath thee with volcanic force:
Dread trials! yet encountered and sustained
Till not a wreck of help or hope remained,
And law was from necessity received.
1809.

[1] See Note.

"SAY, WHAT IS HONOUR?—'TIS THE FINEST SENSE"

Say, what is Honour?—'Tis the finest sense
Of *justice* which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done. When lawless violence
Invades a Realm, so pressed that in the scale
Of perilous war her weightiest armies fail,
Honour is hopeful elevation,—whence
Glory, and triumph. Yet with politic skill
Endangered States may yield to terms unjust;
Stoop their proud heads, but not unto the dust—
A Foe's most favourite purpose to fulfil:
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust
Are forfeited; but infamy doth kill.

1809.

"THE MARTIAL COURAGE OF A DAY IS VAIN"

The martial courage of a day is vain,
An empty noise of death the battle's roar,
If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain,
Armies or kingdoms. We have heard a strain
Of triumph, how the labouring Danube bore
A weight of hostile corses; drenched with gore
Were the wide fields, the hamlets heaped with slain.
Yet see (the mighty tumult overpast)
Austria a daughter of her Throne hath sold!
And her Tyrolean Champion we behold
Murdered, like one ashore by shipwreck cast,
Murdered without relief. Oh! blind as bold,
To think that such assurance can stand fast!

1809.

"BRAVE SCHILL! BY DEATH DELIVERED"

Brave Schill! by death delivered, take thy flight
From Prussia's timid region. Go, and rest
With heroes, 'mid the islands of the Blest,
Or in the fields of empyrean light.
A meteor wert thou crossing a dark night:
Yet shall thy name, conspicuous and sublime,
Stand in the spacious firmament of time,
Fixed as a star: such glory is thy right.
Alas! it may not be: for earthly fame
Is Fortune's frail dependant; yet there lives
A Judge, who, as man claims by merit, gives;
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed.

1809.

"CALL NOT THE ROYAL SWEDE UNFORTUNATE"

Call not the royal Swede unfortunate,
Who never did to Fortune bend the knee;
Who slighted fear; rejected steadfastly
Temptation; and whose kingly name and state
Have "perished by his choice, and not his fate!"
Hence lives He, to his inner self endeared;
And hence, wherever virtue is revered,
He sits a more exalted Potentate,
Throned in the hearts of men. Should Heaven ordain
That this great Servant of a righteous cause
Must still have sad or vexing thoughts to endure,
Yet may a sympathising spirit pause,
Admonished by these truths, and quench all pain
In thankful joy and gratulation pure.[1]

1809

"LOOK NOW ON THAT ADVENTURER WHO HATH PAID"

Look now on that Adventurer who hath paid
His vows to Fortune; who, in cruel slight
Of virtuous hope, of liberty, and right,
Hath followed wheresoe'er a way was made
By the blind Goddess,—ruthless, undismayed;

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[1] See Note to "The King of Sweden," p. 180.

And so hath gained at length a prosperous height,
Round which the elements of worldly might
Beneath his haughty feet, like clouds, are laid.
O joyless power that stands by lawless force!
Curses are *his* dire portion, scorn, and hate,
Internal darkness and unquiet breath;
And, if old judgments keep their sacred course,
Him from that height shall Heaven precipitate
By violent and ignominious death.

1809.

"IS THERE A POWER THAT CAN SUSTAIN AND CHEER"

Is there a power that can sustain and cheer
The captive chieftain, by a tyrant's doom,
Forced to descend into his destined tomb—
A dungeon dark! where he must waste the year,
And lie cut off from all his heart holds dear;
What time his injured country is a stage
Whereon deliberate Valour and the rage
Of righteous Vengeance side by side appear,
Filling from morn to night the heroic scene
With deeds of hope and everlasting praise:—
Say can he think of this with mind serene
And silent fetters? Yes, if visions bright
Shine on his soul, reflected from the days
When he himself was tried in open light.

1809.

"AH! WHERE IS PALAFOX? NOR TONGUE NOR PEN"

Ah! where is Palafox? Nor tongue nor pen
Reports of him, his dwelling or his grave!
Does yet the unheard-of vessel ride the wave?
Or is she swallowed up, remote from ken
Of pitying human nature? Once again
Methinks that we shall hail thee, Champion brave,
Redeemed to baffle that imperial Slave,
And through all Europe cheer desponding men
With new-born hope. Unbounded is the might
Of martyrdom, and fortitude, and right.
Hark, how thy Country triumphs!—Smilingly
The Eternal looks upon her sword that gleams,
Like his own lightning, over mountains high,
On rampart, and the banks of all her streams.

1810.

"IN DUE OBSERVANCE OF AN ANCIENT RITE"

In due observance of an ancient rite,
The rude Biscayans, when their children lie
Dead in the sinless time of infancy,
Attire the peaceful corse in vestments white;
And, in like sign of cloudless triumph bright,
They bind the unoffending creature's brows
With happy garlands of the pure white rose:
Then do a festal company unite
In choral song; and, while the uplifted cross
Of Jesus goes before, the child is borne
Uncovered to his grave: 'tis closed,—her loss
The Mother *then* mourns, as she needs must mourn;
But soon, through Christian faith, is grief subdued;
And joy returns, to brighten fortitude.

1810.

FEELINGS OF A NOBLE BISCAYAN AT ONE OF THOSE FUNERALS

Yet, yet, Biscayans! we must meet our Foes
With firmer soul, yet labour to regain
Our ancient freedom; else 'twere worse than vain
To gather round the bier these festal shows.
A garland fashioned of the pure white rose
Becomes not one whose father is a slave:
Oh, bear the infant covered to his grave!
These venerable mountains now enclose
A people sunk in apathy and fear.
If this endure, farewell, for us, all good!
The awful light of heavenly innocence
Will fail to illuminate the infant's bier;
And guilt and shame, from which is no defence,
Descend on all that issues from our blood.

1810.

ON A CELEBRATED EVENT IN ANCIENT HISTORY

A Roman Master stands on Grecian ground,
And to the people at the Isthmian Games
Assembled, He, by a herald's voice, proclaims
The Liberty of Greece:—the words rebound
Until all voices in one voice are drowned;
Glad acclamation by which air was rent!
And birds, high-flying in the element,
Dropped to the earth, astonished at the sound!
Yet were the thoughtful grieved; and still that voice
Haunts, with sad echoes, musing Fancy's ear:
Ah! that a *Conqueror's* words should be so dear:
Ah! that a *boon* could shed such rapturous joys!
A gift of that which is not to be given
By all the blended powers of Earth and Heaven.

1810.

UPON THE SAME EVENT

When, far and wide, swift as the beams of morn
The tidings past of servitude repealed,
And of that joy which shook the Isthmian Field,
The rough Ætolians smiled with bitter scorn.
"'Tis known," cried they, "that he, who would adorn
His envied temples with the Isthmian crown,
Must either win, through effort of his own,
The prize, or be content to see it worn
By more deserving brows.—Yet so ye prop,
Sons of the brave who fought at Marathon,
Your feeble spirits! Greece her head hath bowed,
As if the wreath of liberty thereon
Would fix itself as smoothly as a cloud,
Which, at Jove's will, descends on Pelion's top."

1810.

THE OAK OF GUERNICA

The ancient oak of Guernica, says Laborde in his account of Biscay, is a most venerable natural monument. Ferdinand and Isabella, in the year 1476, after hearing mass in the church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, repaired to this tree, under which they swore to the Biscayans to maintain their *fueros* (privileges). What other interest belongs to it in the minds of this people will appear from the following

SUPPOSED ADDRESS TO THE SAME

Oak of Guernica! Tree of holier power
Than that which in Dodona did enshrine
(So faith too fondly deemed) a voice divine
Heard from the depths of its aërial bower—
How canst thou flourish at this blighting hour?
What hope, what joy can sunshine bring to thee,
Or the soft breezes from the Atlantic sea,
The dews of morn, or April's tender shower?
Stroke merciful and welcome would that be
Which should extend thy branches on the ground,
If never more within their shady round
Those lofty-minded Lawgivers shall meet,
Peasant and lord, in their appointed seat,
Guardians of Biscay's ancient liberty.

1810.

INDIGNATION OF A HIGH-MINDED SPANIARD

We can endure that He should waste our lands,
Despoil our temples, and by sword and flame
Return us to the dust from which we came;
Such food a Tyrant's appetite demands:
And we can brook the thought that by his hands
Spain may be overpowered, and he possess,
For his delight, a solemn wilderness
Where all the brave lie dead. But, when of bands
Which he will break for us he dares to speak,
Of benefits, and of a future day
When our enlightened minds shall bless his sway;

Then, the strained heart of fortitude proves weak;
Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare
That he has power to inflict what we lack strength to bear. 1810.

"AVAUNT ALL SPECIOUS PLIANCY OF MIND"

AVAUNT all specious pliancy of mind
In men of low degree, all smooth pretence!
I better like a blunt indifference,
And self-respecting slowness, disinclined
To win me at first sight: and be there joined
Patience and temperance with this high reserve,
Honour that knows the path and will not swerve;
Affections, which, if put to proof, are kind;
And piety towards God. Such men of old
Were England's native growth; and, throughout Spain
(Thanks to high God) forests of such remain:
Then for that Country let our hopes be bold;
For matched with these shall policy prove vain,
Her arts, her strength, her iron, and her gold. 1810.

"O'ERWEENING STATESMEN HAVE FULL LONG RELIED"

O'ERWEENING Statesmen have full long relied
On fleets and armies, and external wealth:
But from *within* proceeds a Nation's health;
Which shall not fail, though poor men cleave with pride
To the paternal floor; or turn aside,
In the thronged city, from the walks of gain,
As being all unworthy to detain
A Soul by contemplation sanctified.
There are who cannot languish in this strife,
Spaniards of every rank, by whom the good
Of such high course was felt and understood;
Who to their Country's cause have bound a life
Erewhile, by solemn consecration, given
To labour and to prayer, to nature, and to heaven.[1] 1810.

THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH GUERILLAS

HUNGER, and sultry heat, and nipping blast
From bleak hill-top, and length of march by night
Through heavy swamp, or over snow-clad height—
These hardships ill-sustained, these dangers past,
The roving Spanish Bands are reached at last,
Charged, and dispersed like foam: but as a flight
Of scattered quails by signs do reunite,
So these,—and, heard of once again, are chased
With combinations of long-practised art
And newly-kindled hope; but they are fled—
Gone are they, viewless as the buried dead:
Where now?—Their sword is at the Foeman's heart;
And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,
And hang like dreams around his guilty bed.
1810.

EPITAPHS

1810.

TRANSLATED FROM CHIABRERA

Those from Chiabrera were chiefly translated when Mr. Coleridge was writing his "*Friend*," in which periodical my "Essay on Epitaphs," written about that time, was first published. For further notice of Chiabrera, in connection with his Epitaphs, see "Musings at Aquapendente."

I

WEEP not, belovèd Friends! nor let the air
For me with sighs be troubled. Not from life
Have I been taken; this is genuine life
And this alone—the life which now I live
In peace eternal; where desire and joy
Together move in fellowship without end.—
Francesco Ceni willed that, after death,
His tombstone thus should speak for him. And surely
Small cause there is for that fond wish of ours
Long to continue in this world; a world
That keeps not faith, nor yet can point a hope
To good, whereof itself is destitute.

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[1] See Laborde's character of the Spanish people; from him the sentiment of these last two lines is taken.

II

Perhaps some needful service of the State
Drew Titus from the depth of studious bowers,
And doomed him to contend in faithless courts,
Where gold determines between right and wrong.
Yet did at length his loyalty of heart,
And his pure native genius, lead him back
To wait upon the bright and gracious Muses,
Whom he had early loved. And not in vain
Such course he held! Bologna's learned schools
Were gladdened by the Sage's voice, and hung
With fondness on those sweet Nestorian strains.
There pleasure crowned his days; and all his thoughts
A roseate fragrance breathed.[1]—O human life,
That never art secure from dolorous change!
Behold a high injunction suddenly
To Arno's side hath brought him, and he charmed
A Tuscan audience: but full soon was called
To the perpetual silence of the grave.
Mourn, Italy, the loss of him who stood
A Champion stedfast and invincible,
To quell the rage of literary War!

III

O Thou who movest onward with a mind
Intent upon thy way, pause, though in haste!
'Twill be no fruitless moment. I was born
Within Savona's walls, of gentle blood.
On Tiber's banks my youth was dedicate
To sacred studies; and the Roman Shepherd
Gave to my charge Urbino's numerous flock.
Well did I watch, much laboured, nor had power
To escape from many and strange indignities;
Was smitten by the great ones of the world,
But did not fall; for Virtue braves all shocks,
Upon herself resting immoveably.
Me did a kindlier fortune then invite
To serve the glorious Henry, King of France,
And in his hands I saw a high reward
Stretched out for my acceptance,—but Death came.
Now, Reader, learn from this my fate, how false,
How treacherous to her promise, is the world;
And trust in God—to whose eternal doom
Must bend the sceptred Potentates of earth.

IV

There never breathed a man who, when his life
Was closing, might not of that life relate
Toils long and hard.—The warrior will report
Of wounds, and bright swords flashing in the field,
And blast of trumpets. He who hath been doomed
To bow his forehead in the courts of kings,
Will tell of fraud and never-ceasing hate,
Envy and heart-inquietude, derived
From intricate cabals of treacherous friends.
I, who on shipboard lived from earliest youth,
Could represent the countenance horrible
Of the vexed waters, and the indignant rage
Of Auster and Boötes. Fifty years
Over the well-steered galleys did I rule:—
From huge Pelorus to the Atlantic pillars,
Rises no mountain to mine eyes unknown;
And the broad gulfs I traversed oft and oft:
Of every cloud which in the heavens might stir
I knew the force; and hence the rough sea's pride
Availed not to my Vessel's overthrow.
What noble pomp and frequent have not I
On regal decks beheld! yet in the end
I learned that one poor moment can suffice
To equalise the lofty and the low.
We sail the sea of life—a *Calm* One finds,
And One a *Tempest*—and, the voyage o'er,
Death is the quiet haven of us all.
If more of my condition ye would know,
Savona was my birth-place, and I sprang

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[1] Ivi vivea giocondo ei suoi pensieri
Erano tutti rose.

The Translator had not skill to come nearer to his original.

Of noble parents; seventy years and three
Lived I—then yielded to a slow disease.

V

TRUE is it that Ambrosio Salinero
With an untoward fate was long involved
In odious litigation; and full long,
Fate harder still! had he to endure assaults
Of racking malady. And true it is
That not the less a frank courageous heart
And buoyant spirit triumphed over pain;
And he was strong to follow in the steps
Of the fair Muses. Not a covert path
Leads to the dear Parnassian forest's shade,
That might from him be hidden; not a track
Mounts to pellucid Hippocrene, but he
Had traced its windings.—This Savona knows,
Yet no sepulchral honours to her Son
She paid, for in our age the heart is ruled
Only by gold. And now a simple stone
Inscribed with this memorial here is raised
By his bereft, his lonely, Chiabrera.
Think not, O Passenger! who read'st the lines,
That an exceeding love hath dazzled me;
No—he was One whose memory ought to spread
Where'er Permessus bears an honoured name,
And live as long as its pure stream shall flow.

VI

DESTINED to war from very infancy
Was I, Roberto Dati, and I took
In Malta the white symbol of the Cross:
Nor in life's vigorous season did I shun
Hazard or toil; among the sands was seen
Of Libya; and not seldom, on the banks
Of wide Hungarian Danube, 'twas my lot
To hear the sanguinary trumpet sounded.
So lived I, and repined not at such fate:
This only grieves me, for it seems a wrong,
That stripped of arms I to my end am brought
On the soft down of my paternal home.
Yet haply Arno shall be spared all cause
To blush for me. Thou, loiter not nor halt
In thy appointed way, and bear in mind
How fleeting and how frail is human life!

VII

O FLOWER of all that springs from gentle blood,
And all that generous nurture breeds to make
Youth amiable; O friend so true of soul
To fair Aglaia; by what envy moved,
Lelius! has death cut short thy brilliant day
In its sweet opening? and what dire mishap
Has from Savona torn her best delight?
For thee she mourns, nor e'er will cease to mourn;
And, should the out-pourings of her eyes suffice not
For her heart's grief, she will entreat Sebeto
Not to withhold his bounteous aid, Sebeto
Who saw thee, on his margin, yield to death,
In the chaste arms of thy belovèd Love!
What profit riches? what does youth avail!
Dust are our hopes;—I, weeping bitterly,
Penned these sad lines, nor can forbear to pray
That every gentle Spirit hither led
May read them, not without some bitter tears.

VIII

NOT without heavy grief of heart did He
On whom the duty fell (for at that time
The father sojourned in a distant land)
Deposit in the hollow of this tomb
A brother's Child, most tenderly beloved!
FRANCESCO was the name the Youth had borne,
POZZOBONNELLI his illustrious house;
And, when beneath this stone the Corse was laid,
The eyes of all Savona streamed with tears.
Alas! the twentieth April of his life
Had scarcely flowered: and at this early time,
By genuine virtue he inspired a hope
That greatly cheered his country: to his kin
He promised comfort; and the flattering thoughts

His friends had in their fondness entertained,[1]
He suffered not to languish or decay.
Now is there not good reason to break forth
Into a passionate lament?—O Soul!
Short while a Pilgrim in our nether world,
Do thou enjoy the calm empyreal air;
And round this earthly tomb let roses rise,
An everlasting spring! in memory
Of that delightful fragrance which was once
From thy mild manners quietly exhaled.

IX

PAUSE, courteous Spirit!—Balbi supplicates
That Thou, with no reluctant voice, for him
Here laid in mortal darkness, wouldst prefer
A prayer to the Redeemer of the world.
This to the dead by sacred right belongs;
All else is nothing.—Did occasion suit
To tell his worth, the marble of this tomb
Would ill suffice: for Plato's lore sublime,
And all the wisdom of the Stagyrite,
Enriched and beautified his studious mind:
With Archimedes also he conversed
As with a chosen friend; (nor did he leave
Those laureat wreaths ungathered which the Nymphs
Twine near their loved Permessus.—Finally,
Himself above each lower thought uplifting,
His ears he closed to listen to the songs
Which Sion's Kings did consecrate of old;
And his Permessus found on Lebanon.
A blessèd Man! who of protracted days
Made not, as thousands do, a vulgar sleep;
But truly did *He* live his life. Urbino,
Take pride in him!—O Passenger, farewell!

MATERNAL GRIEF

This was in part an overflow from the Solitary's description of his own and his wife's feelings upon the decease of their children. (See "Excursion," book III.)

DEPARTED Child! I could forget thee once
Though at my bosom nursed; this woeful gain
Thy dissolution brings, that in my soul
Is present and perpetually abides
A shadow, never, never to be displaced
By the returning substance, seen or touched,
Seen by mine eyes, or clasped in my embrace.
Absence and death how differ they! and how
Shall I admit that nothing can restore
What one short sigh so easily removed?—
Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought,
Assist me, God, their boundaries to know,
O teach me calm submission to thy Will!
The Child she mourned had overstepped the pale
Of Infancy, but still did breathe the air
That sanctifies its confines, and partook
Reflected beams of that celestial light
To all the Little-ones on sinful earth
Not unvouchsafed—a light that warmed and cheered
Those several qualities of heart and mind
Which, in her own blest nature, rooted deep,
Daily before the Mother's watchful eye,
And not hers only, their peculiar charms
Unfolded,—beauty, for its present self,
And for its promises to future years,
With not unfrequent rapture fondly hailed.
Have you espied upon a dewy lawn
A pair of Leverets each provoking each
To a continuance of their fearless sport,
Two separate Creatures in their several gifts
Abounding, but so fashioned that, in all
That Nature prompts them to display, their looks,
Their starts of motion and their fits of rest,
An undistinguishable style appears
And character of gladness, as if Spring
Lodged in their innocent bosoms, and the spirit
Of the rejoicing morning were their own?
Such union, in the lovely Girl maintained
And her twin Brother, had the parent seen,
Ere, pouncing like a ravenous bird of prey,
Death in a moment parted them, and left
The Mother, in her turns of anguish, worse
Than desolate; for oft-times from the sound
Of the survivor's sweetest voice (dear child,

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[1] In justice to the Author, I subjoin the original:—
——————— e degli amici
Non lasciava languire i bei pensieri.

He knew it not) and from his happiest looks,
Did she extract the food of self-reproach,
As one that lived ungrateful for the stay
By Heaven afforded to uphold her maimed
And tottering spirit. And full oft the Boy,
Now first acquainted with distress and grief,
Shrunk from his Mother's presence, shunned with fear
Her sad approach, and stole away to find,
In his known haunts of joy where'er he might,
A more congenial object. But, as time
Softened her pangs and reconciled the child
To what he saw, he gradually returned,
Like a scared Bird encouraged to renew
A broken intercourse; and, while his eyes
Were yet with pensive fear and gentle awe
Turned upon her who bore him, she would stoop
To imprint a kiss that lacked not power to spread
Faint colour over both their pallid cheeks,
And stilled his tremulous lip. Thus they were calmed
And cheered; and now together breathe fresh air
In open fields; and when the glare of day
Is gone, and twilight to the Mother's wish
Befriends the observance, readily they join
In walks whose boundary is the lost One's grave,
Which he with flowers hath planted, finding there
Amusement, where the Mother does not miss
Dear consolation, kneeling on the turf
In prayer, yet blending with that solemn rite
Of pious faith the vanities of grief;
For such, by pitying Angels and by Spirits
Transferred to regions upon which the clouds
Of our weak nature rest not, must be deemed
Those willing tears, and unforbidden sighs,
And all those tokens of a cherished sorrow,
Which, soothed and sweetened by the grace of Heaven
As now it is, seems to her own fond heart,
Immortal as the love that gave it being.

1810.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE YEARS OLD

Written at Allanbank, Grasmere. Picture of my Daughter Catharine, who died the year after.

LOVING she is, and tractable, though wild;
And Innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone
Than when both young and old sit gathered round
And take delight in its activity;
Even so this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient, solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched;
Unthought-of, unexpected, as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-flowers,
Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-coloured images imprest
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

1811.

SPANISH GUERILLAS

THEY seek, are sought; to daily battle led,
Shrink not, though far outnumbered by their Foes,
For they have learnt to open and to close
The ridges of grim war; and at their head
Are captains such as erst their country bred
Or fostered, self-supported chiefs,—like those
Whom hardy Rome was fearful to oppose;
Whose desperate shock the Carthaginian fled.
In One who lived unknown a shepherd's life
Redoubted Viriatus breathes again;
And Mina, nourished in the studious shade,
With that great Leader[1] vies, who, sick of strife
And bloodshed, longed in quiet to be laid
In some green island of the western main.

1811.

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[1] Sertorius.

"THE POWER OF ARMIES IS A VISIBLE THING"

The power of Armies is a visible thing,
Formal, and circumscribed in time and space;
But who the limits of that power shall trace
Which a brave People into light can bring
Or hide, at will,—for freedom combating
By just revenge inflamed? No foot may chase,
No eye can follow, to a fatal place
That power, that spirit, whether on the wing
Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the wind
Within its awful caves.—From year to year
Springs this indigenous produce far and near;
No craft this subtle element can bind,
Rising like water from the soil, to find
In every nook a lip that it may cheer.

1811.

"HERE PAUSE: THE POET CLAIMS AT LEAST THIS PRAISE"

Here pause: the poet claims at least this praise,
That virtuous Liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song, which did not shrink from hope
In the worst moment of these evil days;
From hope, the paramount *duty* that Heaven lays,
For its own honour, on man's suffering heart.
Never may from our souls one truth depart—
That an accursed thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye;
Nor—touched with due abhorrence of *their* guilt
For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood is spilt,
And justice labours in extremity—
Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny!

1811.

EPISTLE

TO SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, BART.

FROM THE SOUTH-WEST COAST OF CUMBERLAND

1811

This poem opened, when first written, with a paragraph that has been transferred as an introduction to the first series of my Scotch Memorials. The journey, of which the first part is here described, was from Grasmere to Bootle on the south-west coast of Cumberland, the whole among mountain roads through a beautiful country; and we had fine weather. The verses end with our breakfast at the head of Yewdale in a yeoman's house, which, like all the other property in that sequestered vale, has passed or is passing into the hands of Mr. James Marshall of Monk Coniston, —in Mr. Knott's, the late owner's, time called Waterhead. Our hostess married a Mr. Oldfield, a lieutenant in the Navy: they lived together for some time at Hacket, where she still resides as his widow. It was in front of that house, on the mountain side, near which stood the peasant who, while we were passing at a distance, saluted us, waving a kerchief in her hand as described in the poem. (This matron and her husband were then residing at the Hacket. The house and its inmates are referred to in the fifth book of the "Excursion," in the passage beginning—

"You behold,
High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
With stony barrenness, a shining speck."—J. C.)

The dog which we met with soon after our starting belonged to Mr. Rowlandson, who for forty years was curate of Grasmere in place of the rector, who lived to extreme old age in a state of insanity. Of this Mr. R. much might be said both with reference to his character, and the way in which he was regarded by his parishioners. He was a man of a robust frame, had a firm voice and authoritative manner, of strong natural talents, of which he was himself conscious, for he has been heard to say (it grieves me to add) with an oath—"If I had been brought up at college I should have been a bishop." Two vices used to struggle in him for mastery, avarice and the love of strong drink: but avarice, as is common in like cases, always got the better of its opponent; for, though he was often intoxicated, it was never, I believe, at his own expense. As has been said of one in a more exalted station, he would take any *given* quantity. I have heard a story of him which is worth the telling. One summer's morning, our Grasmere curate, after a night's carouse in the vale of Langdale, on his return home, having reached a point near which the whole of the vale of Grasmere might be seen with the lake immediately below him, stepped aside and sat down on the turf. After looking for some time at the landscape, then in the perfection of its morning beauty, he exclaimed—"Good God, that I should have led so long such a life in such a place!"—This no doubt was deeply felt by him at the time, but I am not authorised to say that any noticeable amendment followed. Penuriousness strengthened upon him as his body grew feebler with age. He had purchased property and kept some land in his own hands, but he could not find in his heart to lay out the necessary hire for labourers at the proper season, and consequently he has often been seen in half-dotage working his hay in the month of November by moonlight, a melancholy sight which I myself have witnessed. Notwithstanding all that has been said, this man, on account of his talents and superior education, was looked up to by his parishioners, who, without a single exception, lived at that time (and most of them upon their own small inheritances) in a state of republican equality, a condition favourable to the growth of kindly feelings among them, and in a striking degree exclusive to temptations to gross vice and scandalous behaviour. As a pastor their curate did little or nothing for them; but what could more strikingly set forth the efficacy of the Church of England through its Ordinances and Liturgy than that, in spite of the unworthiness of the minister, his church was regularly attended; and, though there was not much appearance in his flock of what might be called animated piety, intoxication was rare, and dissolute morals unknown? With the Bible they were for the most part well acquainted; and, as was strikingly shown when they were under affliction, must have been supported and comforted by habitual belief in those truths which it is the aim of the Church to inculcate.—*Loughrigg Tarn.* This beautiful pool and the surrounding scene are minutely described in my little Book on the Lakes. Sir G. H. Beaumont, in the earlier part of his life, was induced, by his love of nature and the art of painting, to take up his abode at Old Brathay, about three miles from this spot, so that he must have seen it under many aspects; and he was so much pleased with it that he purchased the Tarn with a view to build, near it, such a residence as is alluded to in this Epistle. Baronets and knights were not so common in that day as now, and Sir Michael le Fleming, not liking to have a rival in that kind of distinction so near him, claimed a sort of lordship over the territory, and showed dispositions little in unison with those of Sir G. Beaumont, who was eminently a lover of peace. The project of building was in consequence given up, Sir George retaining possession of the Tarn. Many years afterwards a Kendal tradesman born upon its banks applied to me for the purchase of it, and accordingly it was sold for the sum that had been given for it, and the money was laid out under my direction upon a substantial oak fence for a certain number of yew trees to be planted in Grasmere churchyard; two were planted in each enclosure, with a view to remove, after a certain time, the one which throve the least. After several years, the stouter plant being left, the others were taken up and placed in other parts of the same churchyard, and were adequately fenced at the expense and under the care of the late Mr. Barber, Mr. Greenwood, and myself: the whole eight are now thriving, and are already an ornament to a place which, during late years, has lost much of its rustic simplicity by the introduction of iron palisades to fence off family burying-grounds, and by numerous monuments, some of them in very bad taste; from which this place of burial was in my memory quite free. See the lines in the sixth book of the "Excursion" beginning—"Green is the churchyard, beautiful and green." The "Epistle" to which these notes refer, though written so far back as 1804, was carefully revised so late as 1842, previous to its publication. I am loth to add, that it was never seen by the person to whom it is addressed. So sensible am I of the deficiencies in all that I write, and so far does everything that I attempt fall short of what I wish it to be, that even private publication, if such a term may be allowed, requires more resolution than I can command. I have written to give vent to my own mind, and not without hope that, some time or other, kindred minds might benefit by my labours: but I am inclined to believe I should never have ventured to send forth any verses of mine to the world if it had not been done on the pressure of personal occasions. Had I been a rich man, my productions, like this "Epistle," the tragedy of the "Borderers," etc., would most likely have been confined to manuscript.

FAR from our home by Grasmere's quiet Lake,
From the Vale's peace which all her fields partake,
Here on the bleakest point of Cumbria's shore
We sojourn stunned by Ocean's ceaseless roar;
While, day by day, grim neighbour! huge Black Comb
Frowns deepening visibly his native gloom,
Unless, perchance rejecting in despite

What on the Plain *we* have of warmth and light,
In his own storms he hides himself from sight.
Rough is the time; and thoughts, that would be free
From heaviness, oft fly, dear Friend, to thee;
Turn from a spot where neither sheltered road
Nor hedge-row screen invites my steps abroad;
Where one poor Plane-tree, having as it might
Attained a stature twice a tall man's height,
Hopeless of further growth, and brown and sere
Through half the summer, stands with top cut sheer,
Like an unshifting weathercock which proves
How cold the quarter that the wind best loves,
Or like a Centinel that, evermore
Darkening the window, ill defends the door
Of this unfinished house—a Fortress bare,
Where strength has been the Builder's only care;
Whose rugged walls may still for years demand
The final polish of the Plasterer's hand.
—This Dwelling's Inmate more than three weeks space
And oft a Prisoner in the cheerless place,
I—of whose touch the fiddle would complain,
Whose breath would labour at the flute in vain,
In music all unversed, nor blessed with skill
A bridge to copy, or to paint a mill,
Tired of my books, a scanty company!
And tired of listening to the boisterous sea—
Pace between door and window muttering rhyme,
An old resource to cheat a froward time!
Though these dull hours (mine is it, or their shame?)
Would tempt me to renounce that humble aim.
—But if there be a Muse who, free to take
Her seat upon Olympus, doth forsake
Those heights (like Phœbus when his golden locks
He veiled, attendant on Thessalian flocks)
And, in disguise, a Milkmaid with her pail
Trips down the pathways of some winding dale;
Or, like a Mermaid, warbles on the shores
To fishers mending nets beside their doors;
Or, Pilgrim-like, on forest moss reclined,
Gives plaintive ditties to the heedless wind,
Or listens to its play among the boughs
Above her head and so forgets her vows—
If such a Visitant of Earth there be
And she would deign this day to smile on me
And aid my verse, content with local bounds
Of natural beauty and life's daily rounds,
Thoughts, chances, sights, or doings, which we tell
Without reserve to those whom we love well—
Then haply, Beaumont! words in current clear
Will flow, and on a welcome page appear
Duly before thy sight, unless they perish here.

What shall I treat of? News from Mona's Isle?
Such have we, but unvaried in its style;
No tales of Runagates fresh landed, whence
And wherefore fugitive or on what pretence;
Of feasts, or scandal, eddying like the wind
Most restlessly alive when most confined.
Ask not of me, whose tongue can best appease
The mighty tumults of the HOUSE OF KEYS;
The last year's cup whose Ram or Heifer gained,
What slopes are planted, or what mosses drained:
An eye of fancy only can I cast
On that proud pageant now at hand or past,
When full five hundred boats in trim array,
With nets and sails outspread and streamers gay,
And chanted hymns and stiller voice of prayer,
For the old Manx-harvest to the Deep repair,
Soon as the herring-shoals at distance shine
Like beds of moonlight shifting on the brine.

Mona from our Abode is daily seen,
But with a wilderness of waves between;
And by conjecture only can we speak
Of aught transacted there in bay or creek;

No tidings reach us thence from town or field,
Only faint news her mountain sunbeams yield,
And some we gather from the misty air,
And some the hovering clouds, our telegraph, declare.
But these poetic mysteries I withhold;
For Fancy hath her fits both hot and cold,
And should the colder fit with You be on
When You might read, my credit would be gone.
Let more substantial themes the pen engage,
And nearer interests culled from the opening stage
Of our migration.—Ere the welcome dawn
Had from the east her silver star withdrawn,
The Wain stood ready, at our Cottage-door,
Thoughtfully freighted with a various store;
And long or ere the uprising of the Sun
O'er dew-damped dust our journey was begun,
A needful journey, under favouring skies,
Through peopled Vales; yet something in the guise
Of those old Patriarchs when from well to well
They roamed through Wastes where now the tented Arabs dwell.
Say first, to whom did we the charge confide,
Who promptly undertook the Wain to guide
Up many a sharply-twining road and down,
And over many a wide hill's craggy crown,
Through the quick turns of many a hollow nook,
And the rough bed of many an unbridged brook?
A blooming Lass—who in her better hand
Bore a light switch, her sceptre of command
When, yet a slender Girl, she often led,
Skilful and bold, the horse and burthened *sled*[1]
From the peat-yielding Moss on Gowdar's head.
What could go wrong with such a Charioteer
For goods and chattels, or those Infants dear,
A Pair who smilingly sate side by side,
Our hope confirming that the salt-sea tide
Whose free embraces we were bound to seek,
Would their lost strength restore and freshen the pale cheek?
Such hope did either Parent entertain
Pacing behind along the silent lane.
Blithe hopes and happy musings soon took flight,
For lo! an uncouth melancholy sight—
On a green bank a creature stood forlorn
Just half protruded to the light of morn,
Its hinder part concealed by hedge-row thorn
The Figure called to mind a beast of prey
Stript of its frightful powers by slow decay,
And, though no longer upon rapine bent,
Dim memory keeping of its old intent.
We started, looked again with anxious eyes,
And in that griesly object recognise
The Curate's Dog—his long-tried friend, for they,
As well we knew, together had grown grey.
The Master died, his drooping servant's grief
Found at the Widow's feet some sad relief;
Yet still he lived in pining discontent,
Sadness which no indulgence could prevent;
Hence whole day wanderings, broken nightly sleeps
And lonesome watch that out of doors he keeps;
Not oftentimes, I trust, as we, poor brute!
Espied him on his legs sustained, blank, mute,
And of all visible motion destitute,
So that the very heaving of his breath
Seemed stopt, though by some other power than death.
Long as we gazed upon the form and face,
A mild domestic pity kept its place,
Unscared by thronging fancies of strange hue
That haunted us in spite of what we knew.
Even now I sometimes think of him as lost
In second-sight appearances, or crost
By spectral shapes of guilt, or to the ground,
On which he stood, by spells unnatural bound,
Like a gaunt shaggy Porter forced to wait
In days of old romance at Archimago's gate.
Advancing Summer, Nature's law fulfilled,
The choristers in every grove had stilled;
But we, we lacked not music of our own,
For lightsome Fanny had thus early thrown,
Mid the gay prattle of those infant tongues,

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[1] A local word for Sledge.

Some notes prelusive, from the round of songs
With which, more zealous than the liveliest bird
That in wild Arden's brakes was ever heard,
Her work and her work's partners she can cheer,
The whole day long, and all days of the year.
  Thus gladdened from our own dear Vale we pass
And soon approach Diana's Looking-glass!
To Loughrigg-tarn, round clear and bright as heaven,
Such name Italian fancy would have given,
Ere on its banks the few grey cabins rose
That yet disturb not its concealed repose
More than the feeblest wind that idly blows.
  Ah, Beaumont! when an opening in the road
Stopped me at once by charm of what it showed,
The encircling region vividly exprest
Within the mirror's depth, a world at rest—
Sky streaked with purple, grove and craggy *bield*,[1]
And the smooth green of many a pendent field,
And, quieted and soothed, a torrent small,
A little daring would-be waterfall,
One chimney smoking and its azure wreath,
Associate all in the calm Pool beneath,
With here and there a faint imperfect gleam
Of water-lilies veiled in misty steam—
What wonder at this hour of stillness deep,
A shadowy link 'tween wakefulness and sleep,
When Nature's self, amid such blending, seems
To render visible her own soft dreams,
If, mixed with what appeared of rock, lawn, wood,
Fondly embosomed in the tranquil flood,
A glimpse I caught of that Abode, by Thee
Designed to rise in humble privacy,
A lowly Dwelling, here to be outspread,
Like a small Hamlet, with its bashful head
Half hid in native trees. Alas 'tis not,
Nor ever was; I sighed, and left the spot
Unconscious of its own untoward lot,
And thought in silence, with regret too keen,
Of unexperienced joys that might have been;
Of neighbourhood and intermingling arts,
And golden summer days uniting cheerful hearts.
But time, irrevocable time, is flown.
And let us utter thanks for blessings sown
And reaped—what hath been, and what is, our own.
  Not far we travelled ere a shout of glee,
Startling us all, dispersed my reverie;
Such shout as many a sportive echo meeting
Oft-times from Alpine *chalets* sends a greeting.
Whence the blithe hail? behold a Peasant stand
On high, a kerchief waving in her hand!
Not unexpectant that by early day
Our little Band would thrid this mountain way,
Before her cottage on the bright hill side
She hath advanced with hope to be descried.
Right gladly answering signals we displayed,
Moving along a tract of morning shade,
And vocal wishes sent of like good will
To our kind Friend high on the sunny hill—
Luminous region, fair as if the prime
Were tempting all astir to look aloft or climb;
Only the centre of the shining cot
With door left open makes a gloomy spot,
Emblem of those dark corners sometimes found
Within the happiest breast on earthly ground.
  Rich prospect left behind of stream and vale,
And mountain-tops, a barren ridge we scale;
Descend, and reach, in Yewdale's depths, a plain
With haycocks studded, striped with yellowing grain—
An area level as a Lake and spread
Under a rock too steep for man to tread,
Where sheltered from the north and bleak northwest
Aloft the Raven hangs a visible nest,
Fearless of all assaults that would her brood molest.
Hot sunbeams fill the steaming vale; but hark,
At our approach, a jealous watch-dog's bark,

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[1] A word common in the country, signifying shelter, as in Scotland.

Noise that brings forth no liveried Page of state,
But the whole household, that our coming wait.
With Young and Old warm greetings we exchange,
And jocund smiles, and toward the lowly Grange
Press forward by the teasing dogs unscared.
Entering, we find the morning meal prepared:
So down we sit, though not till each had cast
Pleased looks around the delicate repast—
Rich cream, and snow-white eggs fresh from the nest,
With amber honey from the mountain's breast;
Strawberries from lane or woodland, offering wild
Of children's industry, in hillocks piled;
Cakes for the nonce, and butter fit to lie
Upon a lordly dish; frank hospitality
Where simple art with bounteous nature vied,
And cottage comfort shunned not seemly pride.
Kind Hostess! Handmaid also of the feast,
If thou be lovelier than the kindling East,
Words by thy presence unrestrained may speak
Of a perpetual dawn from brow and cheek
Instinct with light whose sweetest promise lies,
Never retiring, in thy large dark eyes,
Dark but to every gentle feeling true,
As if their lustre flowed from ether's purest blue.
Let me not ask what tears may have been wept
By those bright eyes, what weary vigils kept,
Beside that hearth what sighs may have been heaved
For wounds inflicted, nor what toil relieved
By fortitude and patience, and the grace
Of heaven in pity visiting the place.
Not unadvisedly those secret springs
I leave unsearched: enough that memory clings,
Here as elsewhere, to notices that make
Their own significance for hearts awake,
To rural incidents, whose genial powers
Filled with delight three summer morning hours.
More could my pen report of grave or gay
That through our gipsy travel cheered the way;
But, bursting forth above the waves, the Sun
Laughs at my pains, and seems to say, "Be done."
Yet, Beaumont, thou wilt not, I trust, reprove
This humble offering made by Truth to Love,
Nor chide the Muse that stooped to break a spell
Which might have else been on me yet:—
FAREWELL.

1811.

UPON PERUSING THE FOREGOING EPISTLE THIRTY YEARS AFTER ITS COMPOSITION

SOON did he Almighty Giver of all rest
Take those dear young Ones to a fearless nest;
And in Death's arms has long reposed the Friend
For whom this simple Register was penned.
Thanks to the moth that spared it for our eyes;
And Strangers even the slighted Scroll may prize,
Moved by the touch of kindred sympathies.
For—save the calm, repentance sheds o'er strife
Raised by remembrances of misused life,
The light from past endeavours purely willed
And by Heaven's favour happily fulfilled;
Save hope that we, yet bound to Earth, may share
The joys of the Departed—what so fair
As blameless pleasure, not without some tears,
Reviewed through Love's transparent veil of years?

NOTE.—LOUGHRIGG TARN, alluded to in the foregoing Epistle, resembles, though much smaller in compass, the Lake Nemi, or *Speculum Dianæ* as it is often called, not only in its clear waters and circular form, and the beauty immediately surrounding it, but also as being overlooked by the eminence of Langdale Pikes as Lake Nemi is by that of Monte Calvo. Since this Epistle was written Loughrigg Tarn has lost much of its beauty by the felling of many natural clumps of wood, relics of the old forest, particularly upon the farm called "The Oaks," so called from the abundance of that tree which grew there.

It is to be regretted, upon public grounds, that Sir George Beaumont did not carry into effect his intention of constructing here a Summer Retreat in the style I have described; as his taste would have set an example how buildings, with all the accommodations modern society requires, might be introduced even into the most secluded parts of this country without injuring their native character.

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE

PAINTED BY SIR G. H. BEAUMONT, BART.

This was written when we dwelt in the Parsonage at Grasmere. The principal features of the picture are Bredon Hill and Cloud Hill near Coleorton. I shall never forget the happy feeling with which my heart was filled when I was impelled to compose this Sonnet. We resided only two years in this house; and during the last half of the time, which was after this poem had been written, we lost our two children, Thomas and Catharine. Our sorrow upon these events often brought it to my mind, and cast me upon the support to which the last line of it gives expression—

"The appropriate calm of blest eternity."

It is scarcely necessary to add that we still possess the Picture.

PRAISED be the Art whose subtle power could stay
Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
And showed the Bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.
Soul-soothing Art! whom Morning, Noontide, Even,
Do serve with all their changeful pageantry;
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

1811.

INSCRIPTIONS

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON, THE SEAT OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART., LEICESTERSHIRE

In the grounds of Coleorton these verses are engraved on a stone placed near the Tree, which was thriving and spreading when I saw it in the summer of 1841.

THE embowering rose, the acacia, and the pine,
Will not unwillingly their place resign;
If but the Cedar thrive that near them stands,
Planted by Beaumont's and by Wordsworth's hands.
One wooed the silent Art with studious pains:
These groves have heard the Other's pensive strains;
Devoted thus, their spirits did unite
By interchange of knowledge and delight.
May Nature's kindliest powers sustain the Tree,
And Love protect it from all injury!
And when its potent branches, wide outthrown,
Darken the brow of this memorial Stone,
Here may some Painter sit in future days,
Some future Poet meditate his lays;
Not mindless of that distant age renowned
When Inspiration hovered o'er this ground,
The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth-field;
And of that famous Youth, full soon removed
From earth, perhaps by Shakspeare's self approved,
Fletcher's Associate, Jonson's Friend beloved.

1808.

IN A GARDEN OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART.

This Niche is in the sandstone-rock in the winter-garden at Coleorton, which garden, as has been elsewhere said, was made under our direction out of an old unsightly quarry. While the labourers were at work, Mrs. Wordsworth, my Sister, and I used to amuse ourselves occasionally in scooping this seat out of the soft stone. It is of the size, with something of the appearance, of a Stall in a Cathedral. This inscription is not engraven, as the former and the two following are, in the grounds.

Oft is the medal faithful to its trust
When temples, columns, towers, are laid in dust;
And 'tis a common ordinance of fate
That things obscure and small outlive the great:
Hence, when yon mansion and the flowery trim
Of this fair garden, and its alleys dim,
And all its stately trees, are passed away,
This little Niche, unconscious of decay,
Perchance may still survive. And be it known
That it was scooped within the living stone,—
Not by the sluggish and ungrateful pains
Of labourer plodding for his daily gains,
But by an industry that wrought in love;
With help from female hands, that proudly strove
To aid the work, what time these walks and bowers
Were shaped to cheer dark winter's lonely hours. 1811.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART., AND IN HIS NAME, FOR AN URN, PLACED BY HIM AT THE TERMINATION OF A NEWLY-PLANTED AVENUE, IN THE SAME GROUNDS

Ye Lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed Urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return;
And be not slow a stately growth to rear
Of pillars, branching off from year to year,
Till they have learned to frame a darksome aisle;—
That may recall to mind that awful Pile
Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,
In the last sanctity of fame is laid.
—There, though by right the excelling Painter sleep
Where Death and Glory a joint sabbath keep,
Yet not the less his Spirit would hold dear
Self-hidden praise, and Friendship's private tear:
Hence, on my patrimonial grounds, have I
Raised this frail tribute to his memory;
From youth a zealous follower of the Art
That he professed; attached to him in heart;
Admiring, loving, and with grief and pride
Feeling what England lost when Reynolds died. 1808.

FOR A SEAT IN THE GROVES OF COLEORTON.

Beneath yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound,
Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest ground
Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from thy view,
The ivied Ruins of forlorn Grace Dieu;
Erst a religious House, which day and night
With hymns resounded, and the chanted rite:
And when those rites had ceased, the Spot gave birth
To honourable Men of various worth:
There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,
Did Francis Beaumont sport, an eager child;
There, under shadow of the neighbouring rocks,
Sang youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks;
Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams
Of slighted love, and scorn, and jealous rage,
With which his genius shook the buskined stage.
Communities are lost, and Empires die,
And things of holy use unhallowed lie;
They perish;—but the Intellect can raise,
From airy words alone, a Pile that ne'er decays. 1811.

SONG FOR THE SPINNING WHEEL

FOUNDED UPON A BELIEF PREVALENT AMONG THE PASTORAL VALES OF WESTMORELAND

The belief on which this is founded I have often heard expressed by an old neighbour of Grasmere.

Swiftly turn the murmuring wheel!
Night has brought the welcome hour,
When the weary fingers feel
Help, as if from faery power;
Dewy night o'ershades the ground;
Turn the swift wheel round and round!

Now, beneath the starry sky,
Couch the widely-scattered sheep;—
Ply the pleasant labour, ply!
For the spindle, while they sleep,
Runs with speed more smooth and fine,
Gathering up a trustier line.

Short-lived likings may be bred
By a glance from fickle eyes;
But true love is like the thread
Which the kindly wool supplies,
When the flocks are all at rest
Sleeping on the mountain's breast.

1812.

COMPOSED ON THE EVE OF THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND IN THE VALE OF GRASMERE

What need of clamorous bells, or ribands gay,
These humble nuptials to proclaim or grace?
Angels of love, look down upon the place;
Shed on the chosen vale a sun-bright day!
Yet no proud gladness would the Bride display
Even for such promise:—serious is her face,
Modest her mien; and she, whose thoughts keep pace
With gentleness, in that becoming way
Will thank you. Faultless does the Maid appear;
No disproportion in her soul, no strife:
But, when the closer view of wedded life
Hath shown that nothing human can be clear
From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
To her indulgent Lord become more dear.

1812.

WATER-FOWL

OBSERVED FREQUENTLY OVER THE LAKES OF RYDAL AND GRASMERE

"Let me be allowed the aid of verse to describe the evolutions which these visitants sometimes perform, on a fine day towards the close of winter."—*Extract from the Author's Book on the Lakes.*

Mark how the feathered tenants of the flood,
With grace of motion that might scarcely seem
Inferior to angelical, prolong
Their curious pastime! shaping in mid air
(And sometimes with ambitious wing that soars
High as the level of the mountain-tops)
A circuit ampler than the lake beneath—
Their own domain; but ever, while intent
On tracing and retracing that large round,
Their jubilant activity evolves
Hundreds of curves and circlets, to and fro,
Upward and downward, progress intricate
Yet unperplexed, as if one spirit swayed
Their indefatigable flight. 'Tis done—
Ten times, or more, I fancied it had ceased;
But lo! the vanished company again
Ascending; they approach—I hear their wings,
Faint, faint at first; and then an eager sound,
Past in a moment—and as faint again!
They tempt the sun to sport amid their plumes;
They tempt the water, or the gleaming ice,
To show them a fair image; 'tis themselves,
Their own fair forms, upon the glimmering plain,
Painted more soft and fair as they descend
Almost to touch;—then up again aloft,
Up with a sally and a flash of speed,
As if they scorned both resting-place and rest!

1812.

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF BLACK COMB[1]

Mrs. Wordsworth and I, as mentioned in the "Epistle to Sir G. Beaumont," lived some time under its shadow.

THIS Height a ministering Angel might select:
For from the summit of BLACK COMB (dread name
Derived from clouds and storms!) the amplest range
Of unobstructed prospect may be seen
That British ground commands:—low dusky tracts,
Where Trent is nursed, far southward! Cambrian hills
To the south-west, a multitudinous show;
And, in a line of eye-sight linked with these,
The hoary peaks of Scotland that give birth
To Tiviot's stream, to Annan, Tweed, and Clyde:—
Crowding the quarter whence the sun comes forth
Gigantic mountains rough with crags; beneath,
Right at the imperial station's western base
Main ocean, breaking audibly, and stretched
Far into silent regions blue and pale;—
And visibly engirding Mona's Isle
That, as we left the plain, before our sight
Stood like a lofty mount, uplifting slowly
(Above the convex of the watery globe)
Into clear view the cultured fields that streak
Her habitable shores, but now appears
A dwindled object, and submits to lie
At the spectator's feet.—Yon azure ridge,
Is it a perishable cloud? Or there
Do we behold the line of Erin's coast?
Land sometimes by the roving shepherd-swain
(Like the bright confines of another world)
Not doubtfully perceived.—Look homeward now!
In depth, in height, in circuit, how serene
The spectacle, how pure!—Of Nature's works,
In earth, and air, and earth-embracing sea,
A revelation infinite it seems;
Display august of man's inheritance,
Of Britain's calm felicity and power!

1813.

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL ON A STONE, ON THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN OF BLACK COMB

The circumstance alluded to at the conclusion of these verses was told me by Dr. Satterthwaite, who was Incumbent of Bootle, a small town at the foot of Black Comb. He had the particulars from one of the engineers who was employed in making trigonometrical surveys of that region.

STAY, bold Adventurer; rest awhile thy limbs
On this commodious Seat! for much remains
Of hard ascent before thou reach the top
Of this huge Eminence,—from blackness named,
And, to far-travelled storms of sea and land,
A favourite spot of tournament and war!
But thee may no such boisterous visitants
Molest; may gentle breezes fan thy brow;
And neither cloud conceal, nor misty air
Bedim, the grand terraqueous spectacle,
From centre to circumference, unveiled!
Know, if thou grudge not to prolong thy rest,
That on the summit whither thou art bound,
A geographic Labourer pitched his tent,
With books supplied and instruments of art,
To measure height and distance; lonely task,
Week after week pursued!—To him was given
Full many a glimpse (but sparingly bestowed
On timid man) of Nature's processes
Upon the exalted hills. He made report
That once, while there he plied his studious work
Within that canvas Dwelling, colours, lines,
And the whole surface of the out-spread map,

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[1] Black Comb stands at the southern extremity of Cumberland: its base covers a much greater extent of ground than any other mountain in those parts; and, from its situation, the summit commands a more extensive view than any other point in Britain.

Became invisible: for all around
Had darkness fallen—unthreatened, unproclaimed—
As if the golden day itself had been
Extinguished in a moment; total gloom,
In which he sate alone, with unclosed eyes,
Upon the blinded mountain's silent top!

1813.

NOVEMBER 1813

Now that all hearts are glad, all faces bright,
Our aged Sovereign sits, to the ebb and flow
Of states and kingdoms, to their joy or woe,
Insensible. He sits deprived of sight,
And lamentably wrapt in twofold night,
Whom no weak hopes deceived; whose mind ensued,
Through perilous war, with regal fortitude,
Peace that should claim respect from lawless Might.
Dread King of Kings, vouchsafe a ray divine
To his forlorn condition! let thy grace
Upon his inner soul in mercy shine;
Permit his heart to kindle, and to embrace
(Though it were only for a moment's space)
The triumphs of this hour; for they are THINE!

THE EXCURSION

Something must now be said of this poem, but chiefly, as has been done through the whole of these notes, with reference to my personal friends, and especially to her who has perseveringly taken them down from my dictation. Towards the close of the first book stand the lines that were first written, beginning, "Nine tedious years," and ending, "Last human tenant of these ruined walls." These were composed in '95 at Racedown; and for several passages describing the employment and demeanour of Margaret during her affliction, I was indebted to observations made in Dorsetshire, and afterwards at Alfoxden in Somersetshire, where I resided in '97 and '98. The lines towards the conclusion of the fourth book—beginning, "For, the man, who, in this spirit," to the words "intellectual soul"—were in order of time composed the next, either at Racedown or Alfoxden, I do not remember which. The rest of the poem was written in the vale of Grasmere, chiefly during our residence at Allan Bank. The long poem on my own education was, together with many minor poems, composed while we lived at the cottage at Town-end. Perhaps my purpose of giving an additional interest to these my poems in the eyes of my nearest and dearest friends may be promoted by saying a few words upon the character of the Wanderer, the Solitary, and the Pastor, and some other of the persons introduced. And first, of the principal one, the Wanderer. My lamented friend Southey (for this is written a month after his decease) used to say that had he been born a papist, the course of life which would in all probability have been his was the one for which he was most fitted and most to his mind,—that of a Benedictine monk in a convent, furnished, as many once were and some still are, with an inexhaustible library. *Books*, as appears from many passages in his writings, and as was evident to those who had opportunities of observing his daily life, were in fact *his passion;* and *wandering*, I can with truth affirm, was *mine;* but this propensity in me was happily counteracted by inability from want of fortune to fufil my wishes. But, had I been born in a class which would have deprived me of what is called a liberal education, it is not unlikely that, being strong in body, I should have taken to a way of life such as that in which my Pedlar passed the greater part of his days. At all events, I am here called upon freely to acknowledge that the character I have represented in his person is chiefly an idea of what I fancied my own character might have become in his circumstances. Nevertheless, much of what he says and does had an external existence that fell under my own youthful and subsequent observation. An individual named Patrick, by birth and education a Scotchman, followed this humble occupation for many years, and afterwards settled in the town of Kendal. He married a kinswoman of my wife's, and her sister Sarah was brought up from her ninth year under this good man's roof. My own imaginations I was happy to find clothed in reality, and fresh ones suggested, by what she reported of this man's tenderness of heart, his strong and pure imagination, and his solid attainments in literature, chiefly religious whether in prose or verse. At Hawkshead also, while I was a schoolboy, there occasionally resided a Packman (the name then generally given to persons of this calling) with whom I had frequent conversations upon what had befallen him, and what he had observed, during his wandering life; and, as was natural, we took much to each other: and, upon the subject of *Pedlarism* in general, as *then* followed, and its favourableness to an intimate knowledge of human concerns, not merely among the humbler classes of society, I need say nothing here in addition to what is to be found in the "Excursion," and a note attached to it. Now for the Solitary. Of him I have much less to say. Not long after we took up our abode at Grasmere, came to reside there, from what motive I either never knew or have forgotten, a Scotchman a little past the middle of life, who had for many years been chaplain to a Highland regiment. He was in no respect as far as I know, an interesting character, though in his appearance there was a good deal that attracted attention, as if he had been shattered in fortune and not happy in mind. Of his quondam position I availed myself, to connect with the Wanderer, also a Scotchman, a character suitable to my purpose, the elements of which I drew from several persons with whom I had been connected, and who fell under my observation during frequent residences in London at the beginning of the French Revolution. The chief of these was, one may *now* say, a Mr. Fawcett, a preacher at a dissenting meeting-house at the Old Jewry. It happened to me several times to be one of his congregation through my connection with Mr. Nicholson of Cateaton Street, who at that time, when I had not many acquaintances in London, used often to invite me to dine with him on Sundays; and I took that opportunity (Mr. N. being a dissenter) of going to hear Fawcett, who was an able and eloquent man. He published a poem on war, which had a good deal of merit, and made me think more about him than I should otherwise have done. But his Christianity was probably never very deeply rooted; and, like many others in those times of like showy talents, he had not strength of character to withstand the effects of the French Revolution, and of the wild and lax opinions which had done so much towards producing it, and far more in carrying it forward in its extremes. Poor Fawcett, I have been told, became pretty much such a person as I have described; and early disappeared from the stage, having fallen into habits of intemperance, which I have heard (though I will not answer for the fact) hastened his death. Of him I need say no more: there were many like him at that time, which the world will never be without, but which were more numerous then for reasons too obvious to be dwelt upon.

To what is said of the Pastor in the poem I have little to add, but what may be deemed superfluous. It has ever appeared to me highly favourable to the beneficial influence of the Church of England upon all gradations and classes of society, that the patronage of its benefices is in numerous instances attached to the estates of noble families of ancient gentry; and accordingly I am gratified by the opportunity afforded me in the "Excursion," to pourtray the character of a country clergyman of more than ordinary talents, born and bred in the upper ranks of society so as to partake of their refinements, and at the same time brought by his pastoral office and his love of rural life into intimate connection with the peasantry of his native district. To illustrate the relation which in my mind this Pastor bore to the Wanderer, and the resemblance between them, or rather the points of community in their nature, I likened one to an oak and the other to a sycamore; and, having here referred to this comparison, I need only add, I had no one individual in my mind, wishing rather to embody this idea than to break in upon the simplicity of it, by traits of individual character or of any peculiarity of opinion.

And now for a few words upon the scene where these interviews and conversations are supposed to occur. The scene of the first book of the poem is, I must own, laid in a tract of country not sufficiently near to that which soon comes into view in the second book, to agree with the fact. All that relates to Margaret and the ruined cottage, etc., was taken from observations made in the south-west of England, and certainly it would require more than seven-league boots to stretch in one morning from a common in Somersetshire or Dorsetshire to the heights of Furness Fells and the deep valleys they embosom. For thus dealing with space I need make, I trust, no apology, but my friends may be amused by the truth. In the poem, I suppose that the Pedlar and I ascended from a plain country up the vale of Langdale, and struck off a good way above the chapel to the western side of the vale. We ascended the hill and thence looked down upon the circular recess in which lies Blea-Tarn, chosen by the Solitary for his retreat. After we quit his cottage, passing over a low ridge we descend into another vale, that of Little Langdale, towards the head of which stands, embowered or partly shaded by yews and other trees, something between a cottage and a mansion or gentleman's house such as they once were in this country. This I convert into the Parsonage, and at the same time, and as by the waving of a magic wand, I turn the comparatively confined vale of Langdale, its Tarn, and the rude chapel which once adorned the valley, into the stately and comparatively spacious vale of Grasmere, its Lake, and its ancient Parish Church; and upon the side of Loughrigg Fell, at the foot of the Lake, and looking down upon it and the whole vale and its encompassing mountains, the Pastor is supposed by me to stand, when at sunset he addresses his companions in words which I hope my readers will remember, or I should not have taken the trouble of giving so much in detail the materials on which my mind actually worked. Now for a few particulars of *fact* respecting the persons whose stories are told or characters are described by the different speakers. To Margaret I have already alluded. I will add here, that the lines beginning, "She was a woman of a steady mind," faithfully delineate, as far as they go, the character possessed in common by many women whom it has been my happiness to know in humble life; and that several of the most touching things which she is represented as saying and doing are taken from actual observation of the distresses and trials under which different persons were suffering, some of them strangers to me, and others daily under my notice. I was born too late to have a distinct remembrance of the origin of the American war, but the state in which I represent Robert's mind to be I had frequent opportunities of observing at the commencement of our rupture with France in '93, opportunities of which I availed myself in the story of the Female Vagrant as told in the poem on "Guilt and Sorrow." The account given by the Solitary towards the close of the second book, in all that belongs to the character of the Old Man, was taken from a Grasmere pauper, who was boarded in the last house quitting the vale on the road to Ambleside: the character of his hostess, and all that befell the poor man upon the mountain, belong to Paterdale: the woman I knew well; her name was ——— J——, and she was exactly such a person as I describe. The ruins of the old chapel, among which the man was found lying, may yet be traced, and stood upon the ridge that divides Paterdale from Boardale and Martindale, having been placed there for the convenience of both districts. The glorious appearance disclosed above and among the mountains was described partly from what my friend Mr. Luff, who then lived in Paterdale, witnessed upon that melancholy occasion, and partly from what Mrs. Wordsworth and I had seen in company with Sir George and Lady Beaumont above Hartshope Hall on our way from Paterdale to Ambleside.

And now for a few words upon the Church, its Monuments, and the Deceased who are spoken of as lying in the surrounding churchyard. But first for the one picture, given by the Pastor and the Wanderer, of the Living. In this nothing is introduced but what was taken from nature and real life. The cottage is called Hacket, and stands as described on the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the two Langdales: the pair who inhabited it were called Jonathan and Betty Yewdale. Once when our children were ill, of whooping-cough I think, we took them for change of air to this cottage, and were in the habit of going there to drink tea upon fine summer afternoons, so that we became intimately acquainted with the characters, habits, and lives of these good, and, let me say, in the main, wise people. The matron had, in her early youth, been a servant in a house at Hawkshead, where several boys boarded, while I was a schoolboy there. I did not remember her as having served in that capacity; but we had many little anecdotes to tell to each other of remarkable boys, incidents and adventures which had made a noise in their day in that small town. These two persons afterwards settled at Rydal, where they both died.

The church, as already noticed, is that of Grasmere. The interior of it has been improved lately—made warmer by under-drawing the roof and raising the floor—but the rude and antique majesty of its former appearance has been impaired by painting the rafters; and the oak benches, with a simple rail at the back dividing them from each other, have given way to seats that have more the appearance of pews. It is remarkable that, excepting only the pew belonging to Rydal Hall, that to Rydal Mount, the one to the Parsonage, and I believe another, the men and women still continue, as used to be the custom in Wales, to sit separate from each other. Is this practice as old as the Reformation? and when and how did it originate? In the Jewish synagogues and in Lady Huntingdon's chapels the sexes are divided in the same way. In the adjoining churchyard greater changes have taken place. It is now not a little crowded with tombstones; and near the school-house which stands in the churchyard is an ugly structure, built to receive the hearse, which is recently come into use. It would not be worth while to allude to this building or the hearse-vehicle it contains, but that the latter has been the means of introducing a change much to be lamented in the mode of conducting funerals among the mountains. Now, the coffin is lodged in the hearse at the door of the house of the deceased, and the corpse is so conveyed to the churchyard gate: all the solemnity which formerly attended its progress, as described in the poem, is put an end to. So much do I regret this, that I beg to be excused for giving utterance here to a wish that, should it befall me to die at Rydal Mount, my own body may be carried to Grasmere church after the manner in which, till lately, that of every one was borne to that place of sepulture, namely, on the shoulders of neighbours, no house being passed without some words of a funeral psalm being sung at the time by the attendants. When I put into the mouth of the Wanderer, "Many precious rites and customs of our rural ancestry are gone or stealing from us; this I hope will last for ever," and what follows, little did I foresee that the observance and mode of proceeding, which had often affected me so much, would so soon be superseded. Having said much of the injury done to this churchyard, let me add that one is at liberty to look forward to a time when, by the growth of the yew-trees, thriving there, a solemnity will be spread over the place that will in some degree make amends for the old simple character which has already been so much encroached upon, and will be still more every year. I will here set down, more at length, what has been mentioned in a previous note, that my friend Sir George Beaumont, having long ago purchased the beautiful piece of water called Loughrigg Tarn, on the Banks of which he intended to build, I told him that a person in Kendal who was attached to the place wished to purchase it. Sir George, finding the possession of no use to him, consented to part with it, and placed the purchase-money—twenty pounds—at my disposal for any local use which I thought proper. Accordingly I resolved to plant yew-trees in the churchyard, and had four pretty strong large oak enclosures made, in each of which was planted, under my own eye, and principally if not entirely by my own hand, two young trees, with the intention of leaving the one that throve best to stand. Many years after, Mr. Barber, who will long be remembered in Grasmere; Mr. Greenwood, the chief landed proprietor; and myself, had four other enclosures made in the churchyard at our own expense, in each of which was planted a tree taken from its neighbour, and they all stand thriving admirably, the fences having been removed as no longer necessary. May the trees be taken care of hereafter when we are all gone, and some of them will perhaps at some far distant time rival in majesty the yew of Lorton and those which I have described as growing in Borrowdale, where they are still to be seen in grand assemblage.

And now for the persons that are selected as lying in the churchyard. But first for the individual whose grave is prepared to receive him. His story is here truly related: he was a school-fellow of mine for some years. He came to us when he was at least seventeen years of age, very tall, robust, and full-grown. This prevented him from falling into the amusements and games of the school: consequently he gave more time to books. He was not remarkably bright or quick, but by industry he made a progress more than respectable. His parents not being wealthy enough to send him to college, when he left Hawkshead he became a schoolmaster, with a view to prepare himself for holy orders. About this time he fell in love as related in the poem, and everything followed as there described, except that I do not know when and where he died. The number of youths that came to Hawkshead school, from the families of the humble yeomanry, to be educated to a certain degree of scholarship as a preparation for the church, was considerable, and the fortunes of these persons in after life various of course, and of some not a little remarkable. I have now one of this class in my eye who became an usher in a preparatory school and ended in making a large fortune. His manners when he came to Hawkshead were as uncouth as well could be; but he had good abilities, with skill to turn them to account; and when the master of the school, to which he was usher, died, he stept into his place and became proprietor of the establishment. He contrived to manage it with such address, and so much to the taste of what is called high society and the fashionable world, that no school of the kind, even till he retired, was in such high request. Ministers of state, the wealthiest gentry, and nobility of the first rank, vied with each other in bespeaking a place for their sons in the seminary of this fortunate teacher. In the solitude of Grasmere, while living as a married man in a cottage of eight pounds per annum rent, I often used to smile at the tales which reached me of his brilliant career. Not two hundred yards from the cottage in Grasmere, just mentioned, to which I retired, this gentleman, who many years afterwards purchased a small estate in the neighbourhood, is now erecting a boat-house, with an upper story, to be resorted to as an entertaining-room when he and his associates may feel inclined to take their pastime on the lake. Every passenger will be disgusted with the sight of this edifice, not merely as a tasteless thing in itself, but as utterly out of place, and peculiarly fitted, as far as it is observed (and it obtrudes itself on notice at every point of view), to mar the beauty and destroy the pastoral simplicity of the vale. For my own part and that of my household it is our utter detestation, standing by a shore to which, before the highroad was made to pass that way, we used daily and hourly to repair for seclusion and for the shelter of a grove under which I composed many of my poems, the "Brothers" especially, and for this reason we gave the grove that name.

> "That which each man loved
> And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
> Dies with him, or is changed."

So much for my old school-fellow and his exploits. I will only add that the foundation has twice failed, from the lake no doubt being intolerant of the intrusion.

The Miner, next described as having found his treasure after twice ten years of labour, lived in Paterdale, and the story is true to the letter. It seems to me, however, rather remarkable that the strength of mind which had supported him through this long unrewarded labour did not enable him to bear its successful issue. Several times in the course of my life I have heard of sudden influxes of great wealth being followed by derangement, and in one instance the shock of good fortune was so great as to produce absolute idiocy: but these all happened where there had been little or no previous effort to acquire the riches, and therefore such a consequence might the more naturally be expected than in the case of the solitary Miner. In reviewing his story, one cannot but regret that such perseverance was not sustained by a worthier object. Archimedes leapt out of his bath and ran about the streets proclaiming his discovery in a transport of joy, but we are not told that he lost either his life or his senses in consequence. The next character, to whom the Priest is led by contrast with the resoluteness displayed by the foregoing, is taken from a person born and bred in Grasmere, by name Dawson; and whose talents, disposition, and way of life were such as are here delineated. I did not know him, but all was fresh in memory when we settled at Grasmere in the beginning of the century. From this point, the conversation leads to the mention of two individuals who, by their several fortunes, were, at different times, driven to take refuge at the small and obscure town of Hawkshead on the skirt of these mountains. Their stories I had from the dear old dame with whom, as a schoolboy and afterwards, I lodged for nearly the space of ten years. The elder, the Jacobite, was named Drummond, and was of a high family in Scotland: the Hanoverian Whig bore the name of Vandeput, and might perhaps be a descendant of some Dutchman who had come over in the train of King William. At all events his zeal was such that he ruined himself by a contest for the representation of London or Westminster, undertaken to support his party; and retired to this corner of the world, selected, as it had been by Drummond, for that obscurity which, since visiting the Lakes became fashionable, it has no longer retained. So much was this region considered out of the way till a late period, that persons who had fled from justice used often to resort hither for concealment; and some were so bold as to, not unfrequently, make excursions from the place of their retreat, for the purpose of committing fresh offences. Such was particularly the case with two brothers of the name of Weston who took up their abode at Old Brathay, I think about seventy years ago. They were highwaymen, and lived there some time without being discovered, though it was known that they often disappeared in a way and upon errands which could not be accounted for. Their horses were noticed as being of a choice breed, and I have heard from the Relph family, one of whom was a saddler in the town of Kendal, that they were curious in their saddles and housings and accoutrements of their horses. They, as I have heard, and as was universally believed, were in the end both taken and hanged.

"Tall was her stature; her complexion dark
And saturnine."

This person lived at Town-end, and was almost our next neighbour. I have little to notice concerning her beyond what is said in the poem. She was a most striking instance how far a woman may surpass in talent, in knowledge, and culture of mind, those with and among whom she lives, and yet fall below them in Christian virtues of the heart and spirit. It seemed almost, and I say it with grief, that in proportion as she excelled in the one, she failed in the other. How frequently has one to observe in both sexes the same thing, and how mortifying is the reflection!

"As, on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March."

The story that follows was told to Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister by the sister of this unhappy young woman; and every particular was exactly as I have related. The party was not known to me, though she lived at Hawkshead, but it was after I left school. The clergyman, who administered comfort to her in her distress, I knew well. Her sister who told the story was the wife of a leading yeoman in the vale of Grasmere, and they were an affectionate pair and greatly respected by every one who knew them. Neither lived to be old; and their estate—which was perhaps the most considerable then in the vale, and was endeared to them by many remembrances of a salutary character not easily understood, or sympathised with, by those who are born to great affluence—passed to their eldest son, according to the practice of these vales, who died soon after he came into possession. He was an amiable and promising youth, but was succeeded by an only brother, a good-natured man, who fell into habits of drinking, by which he gradually reduced his property; and the other day the last acre of it was sold, and his wife and children and he himself, still surviving, have very little left to live upon, which it would not perhaps have been worth while to record here but that, through all trials, this woman has proved a model of patience, meekness, affectionate forbearance, and forgiveness. Their eldest son, who, through the vices of his father, has thus been robbed of an ancient family inheritance, was never heard to murmur or complain against the cause of their distress, and is now (1843) deservedly the chief prop of his mother's hopes.

The clergyman and his family described at the beginning of the seventh book were, during many years, our principal associates in the vale of Grasmere, unless I were to except our very nearest neighbours. I have entered so particularly into the main points of their history, that I will barely testify in prose that—with the single exception of the particulars of their journey to Grasmere, which, however, was exactly copied from in another instance—the whole that I have said of them is as faithful to the truth as words can make it. There was much talent in the family: the eldest son was distinguished for poetical talent, of which a specimen is given in my notes to the sonnets to the Duddon. Once, when in our cottage at Town-end I was talking with him about poetry, in the course of conversation I presumed to find fault with the versification of Pope, of whom he was an enthusiastic admirer: he defended him with a warmth that indicated much irritation: nevertheless I would not abandon my point, and said, "In compass and variety of sound your own versification surpasses his." Never shall I forget the change in his countenance and tone of voice: the storm was laid in a moment; he no longer disputed my judgment, and I passed immediately in his mind, no doubt, for as great a critic as ever lived. I ought to add, he was a clergyman and a well-educated man, and his verbal memory was the most remarkable of any individual I have known, except a Mr. Archer, an Irishman, who lived several years in this neighbourhood, and who, in this faculty, was a prodigy; he afterwards became deranged, and I fear continues so, if alive. Then follows the character of Robert Walker, for which see notes to the Duddon. Then that of the deaf man, whose epitaph may be seen in the churchyard at the head of Haweswater, and whose qualities of mind and heart, and their benign influence in conjunction with his privation, I had from his relatives on the spot. The blind man, next commemorated, was John Gough, of Kendal, a man known, far beyond his neighbourhood, for his talents and attainments in natural history and science. Of the Infant's grave, next noticed, I will only say, it is an exact picture of what fell under my own observation; and all persons who are intimately acquainted with cottage life must often have observed like instances of the working of the domestic affections.

"A volley thrice repeated o'er the corse
Let down into the hollow of that grave."

This young volunteer bore the name of Dawson, and was younger brother, if I am not mistaken, to the prodigal of whose character and fortunes an account is given towards the beginning of the preceding book. The father of the family I knew well; he was a man of literary education and of experience in society much beyond what was common among the inhabitants of the vale. He had lived a good while in the Highlands of Scotland, as a manager of iron-works at Bunaw, and had acted as clerk to one of my predecessors in the office of Distributor of Stamps, when he used to travel round the country collecting and bringing home the money due to Government, in gold, which, it may be worth while to mention for the sake of my friends, was deposited in the cell or iron closet under the west window of the long room at Rydal Mount, which still exists with the iron doors that guarded the property. This of course was before the time of Bills and Notes. The two sons of this person had no doubt been led by the knowledge of their father to take more delight in scholarship, and had been accustomed in their own minds to take a wider view of social interests than was usual among their associates. The premature death of this gallant young man was much lamented, and, as an attendant at the funeral, I myself witnessed the ceremony and the effect of it as described in the poem.

"Tradition tells
That, in Eliza's golden days, a Knight
Came on a war-horse."
"The house is gone."

The pillars of the gateway in front of the mansion remained when we first took up our abode at Grasmere. Two or three cottages still remain, which are called Knott-houses from the name of the gentleman (I have called him a knight) concerning whom these traditions survive. He was the ancestor of the Knott family, formerly considerable proprietors in the district. What follows in the discourse of the Wanderer upon the changes he had witnessed in rural life, by the introduction of machinery, is truly described from what I myself saw during my boyhood and early youth, and from what was often told me by persons of this humble calling. Happily, most happily, for these mountains, the mischief was diverted from the banks of their beautiful streams, and transferred to open and flat countries abounding in coal, where the agency of steam was found much more effectual for carrying on those demoralising works. Had it not been for this invention, long before the present time every torrent and river in this district would have had its factory, large and populous in proportion to the power of the water that could there have been commanded. Parliament has interfered to prevent the night-work which was once carried on in these mills as actively as during the daytime, and by necessity still more perniciously—a sad disgrace to the proprietors, and to the nation which could so long tolerate such unnatural proceedings. Reviewing at this late period, 1843, what I put into the mouths of my interlocutors a few years after the commencement of the century, I grieve that so little progress has been made in diminishing the evils deplored, or promoting the benefits of education which the Wanderer anticipates. The results of Lord Ashley's labours to defer the time when children might legally be allowed to work in factories, and his endeavours to limit still farther the hours of permitted labour, have fallen far short of his own humane wishes, and those of every benevolent and right-minded man who has carefully attended to this subject: and in the present session of Parliament (1843) Sir James Graham's attempt to establish a course of religious education among the children employed in factories has been abandoned, in consequence of what might easily have been foreseen, the vehement and turbulent opposition of the Dissenters: so that, for many years to come, it may be thought expedient to leave the religious instruction of children entirely in the hands of the several denominations of Christians in the island, each body to work according to its own means and in its own way. Such is my own confidence, a confidence I share with many others of my most valued friends, in the superior advantages, both religious and social, which attend a course of instruction presided over and guided by the clergy of the Church of England, that I have no doubt that, if but once its members, lay and clerical, were duly sensible of those benefits, their church would daily gain ground, and rapidly, upon every shape and fashion of Dissent: and in that case, a great majority in Parliament being sensible of these benefits, the Ministers of the country might be emboldened, were it necessary, to apply funds of the State to the support of education on Church principles. Before I conclude, I cannot forbear noticing the strenuous efforts made at this time in Parliament, by so many persons, to extend manufacturing and commercial industry at the expense of agricultural, though we have recently had abundant proofs that the apprehensions expressed by the Wanderer were not groundless.

"I spake of mischief by the wise diffused
With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads
The healthier, the securer, we become—
Delusion which a moment may destroy!"

The Chartists are well aware of this possibility, and cling to it with an ardour and perseverance which nothing but wiser and more brotherly dealing towards the many, on the part of the wealthy few, can moderate or remove.

"While, from the grassy mountain's open side,
We gazed, in silence hushed."

The point here fixed upon in my imagination is half-way up the northern side of Loughrigg Fell, from which the Pastor and his companions were supposed to look upwards to the sky and mountain-tops, and round the vale, with the lake lying immediately beneath them.

"But turned not without welcome promise made,
That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
Of yet another summer's day, consumed
In wandering with us."

When I reported this promise of the Solitary, and long after, it was my wish, and I might say intention, that we should resume our wanderings, and pass the Borders into his native country, where, as I hoped, he might witness, in the society of the Wanderer, some religious ceremony—a sacrament, say, in the open fields, or a preaching among the mountains—which, by recalling to his mind the days of his early childhood, when he had been present on such occasions in company with his parents and nearest kindred, might have dissolved his heart into tenderness, and so have done more towards restoring the Christian faith in which he had been educated, and, with that, contentedness and even cheerfulness of mind, than all that the Wanderer and Pastor, by their several effusions and addresses, had been able to effect. An issue like this was in my intentions. But, alas!

"'Mid the wreck of IS and WAS,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed!"

To THE RIGHT HON.

WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G.

ETC. ETC.

OFT, through thy fair domains, illustrious Peer!
In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent;
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear.
—Now, by thy care befriended, I appear
Before thee, LONSDALE, and this Work present,
A token (may it prove a monument!)
Of high respect and gratitude sincere.
Gladly would I have waited till my task
Had reached its close; but Life is insecure,
And Hope full oft fallacious as a dream:
Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
Thy favour; trusting that thou wilt not deem
The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
July 29, 1814.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814

The Title-page announces that this is only a portion of a poem; and the Reader must be here apprised that it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to consist of three parts.—The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which "The Excursion" is a part, derives its Title of The Recluse.—Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work,[1] addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, "The Recluse"; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.—The preparatory poem[1] is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a Gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen.—Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of "The Recluse" will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own person; and that in the intermediate part ("The Excursion") the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system; it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the meantime the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first book of "The Recluse," may be acceptable as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem.

[The passage referred to begins with the line, "On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life," see page 343 of the present edition, and ends with, "Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!" page 345.]

BOOK FIRST

THE WANDERER

ARGUMENT

A summer forenoon—The Author reaches a ruined Cottage upon a Common, and there meets with a revered Friend, the Wanderer, of whose education and course of life he gives an account—The Wanderer, while resting under the shade of the Trees that surround the Cottage, relates the History of its last Inhabitant.

'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high:
Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
Through a pale steam; but all the northern downs,

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[1] The Prelude.

In clearest air ascending, showed far off
A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung
From brooding clouds; shadows that lay in spots
Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed;
To him most pleasant who on soft cool moss
Extends his careless limbs along the front
Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
A twilight of its own, an ample shade,
Where the wren warbles, while the dreaming man,
Half conscious of the soothing melody,
With side-long eye looks out upon the scene,
By power of that impending covert, thrown
To finer distance. Mine was at that hour
Far other lot, yet with good hope that soon
Under a shade as grateful I should find
Rest, and be welcomed there to livelier joy.
Across a bare wide Common I was toiling
With languid steps that by the slippery turf
Were baffled; nor could my weak arm disperse
The host of insects gathering round my face,
And ever with me as I paced along.

Upon that open moorland stood a grove,
The wished-for port to which my course was bound.
Thither I came, and there, amid the gloom
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms,
Appeared a roofless Hut; four naked walls
That stared upon each other!—I looked round,
And to my wish and to my hope espied
The Friend I sought; a Man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
There was he seen upon the cottage-bench,
Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep;
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I marked the day before—alone
And stationed in the public way, with face
Turned toward the sun then setting, while that staff
Afforded, to the figure of the man
Detained for contemplation or repose,
Graceful support; his countenance as he stood
Was hidden from my view, and he remained
Unrecognised; but, stricken by the sight,
With slackened footsteps I advanced, and soon
A glad congratulation we exchanged
At such unthought-of meeting.—For the night
We parted, nothing willingly; and now
He by appointment waited for me here,
Under the covert of these clustering elms.

We were tried Friends: amid a pleasant vale,
In the antique market-village where was passed
My school-time, an apartment he had owned,
To which at intervals the Wanderer drew,
And found a kind of home or harbour there.
He loved me; from a swarm of rosy boys
Singled out me, as he in sport would say,
For my grave looks, too thoughtful for my years.
As I grew up, it was my best delight
To be his chosen comrade. Many a time,
On holidays, we rambled through the woods:
We sate—we walked; he pleased me with report
Of things which he had seen; and often touched
Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind
Turned inward; or at my request would sing
Old songs, the product of his native hills;
A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
As cool refreshing water, by the care
Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of drought.
Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse;
How precious, when in riper days I learned
To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice
In the plain presence of his dignity!

Oh! many are the Poets that are sown
By Nature; men endowed with highest gifts,
The vision and the faculty divine;
Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse,

(Which, in the docile season of their youth,
It was denied them to acquire, through lack
Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,
Or haply by a temper too severe,
Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame)
Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
By circumstance to take unto the height
The measure of themselves, these favoured Beings,
All but a scattered few, live out their time,
Husbanding that which they possess within,
And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least; else surely this Man had not left
His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
But, as the mind was filled with inward light,
So not without distinction had he lived,
Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.
And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
And something that may serve to set in view
The feeling pleasures of his loneliness,
His observations, and the thoughts his mind
Had dealt with—I will here record in verse;
Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
Or rise as venerable Nature leads,
The high and tender Muses shall accept
With gracious smile, deliberately pleased,
And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born;
Where, on a small hereditary farm,
An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
His Parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt;
A virtuous household, though exceeding poor!
Pure livers were they all, austere and grave,
And fearing God; the very children taught
Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
And an habitual piety, maintained
With strictness scarcely known on English ground.

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I speak,
In summer, tended cattle on the hills;
But, through the inclement and the perilous days
Of long-continuing winter, he repaired,
Equipped with satchel, to a school, that stood
Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,
Remote from view of city spire, or sound
Of minster clock! From that bleak tenement
He, many an evening, to his distant home
In solitude returning, saw the hills
Grow larger in the darkness; all alone
Beheld the stars come out above his head,
And travelled through the wood, with no one near
To whom he might confess the things he saw.

So the foundations of his mind were laid.
In such communion, not from terror free,
While yet a child, and long before his time,
Had he perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
So vividly great objects that they lay
Upon his mind like substances, whose presence
Perplexed the bodily sense. He had received
A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
With these impressions would he still compare
All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms;
And, being still unsatisfied with aught
Of dimmer character, he thence attained
An active power to fasten images
Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
The liveliness of dreams. Nor did he fail,
While yet a child, with a child's eagerness
Incessantly to turn his ear and eye
On all things which the moving seasons brought
To feed such appetite—nor this alone
Appeased his yearning:—in the after-day
Of boyhood, many an hour in caves forlorn,
And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags
He sate, and even in their fixed lineaments,
Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
Or by creative feeling overborne,
Or by predominance of thought oppressed,

Even in their fixed and steady lineaments
He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
Expression ever varying!
Thus informed,
He had small need of books; for many a tale
Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
Nourished Imagination in her growth,
And gave the Mind that apprehensive power
By which she is made quick to recognise
The moral properties and scope of things.
But eagerly he read, and read again,
Whate'er the minister's old shelf supplied;
The life and death of martyrs, who sustained,
With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
Triumphantly displayed in records left
Of persecution, and the Covenant—times
Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour!
And there, by lucky hap, had been preserved
A straggling volume, torn and incomplete,
That left half-told the preternatural tale,
Romance of giants, chronicle of fiends,
Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts
Strange and uncouth; dire faces, figures dire,
Sharp-kneed, sharp-elbowed, and lean-ankled too,
With long and ghostly shanks—forms which once seen
Could never be forgotten!
In his heart,
Where Fear sate thus, a cherished visitant,
Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,
Or by the silent looks of happy things,
Or flowing from the universal face
Of earth and sky. But he had felt the power
Of Nature, and already was prepared,
By his intense conceptions, to receive
Deeply the lesson deep of love which he,
Whom Nature, by whatever means, has taught
To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

Such was the Boy—but for the growing Youth
What soul was his, when, from the naked top
Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
Beneath him:—Far and wide the clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces could he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love!

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain tops,
Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
O then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
The written promise! Early had he learned
To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die;
But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
All things, responsive to the writing, there
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving; infinite:
There littleness was not; the least of things
Seemed infinite; and there his spirit shaped
Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*.
What wonder if his being thus became
Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
Low thoughts had there no place; yet was his heart
Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,
Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
And whence they flowed; and from them he acquired
Wisdom, which works through patience; thence he learned
In oft-recurring hours of sober thought
To look on Nature with a humble heart,
Self-questioned where it did not understand,
And with a superstitious eye of love.

So passed the time; yet to the nearest town
He duly went with what small overplus
His earnings might supply, and brought away
The book that most had tempted his desires
While at the stall he read. Among the hills
He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
The divine Milton. Lore of different kind,
The annual savings of a toilsome life,
His Schoolmaster supplied; books that explain
The purer elements of truth involved
In lines and numbers, and, by charm severe,
(Especially perceived where nature droops
And feeling is suppressed) preserve the mind
Busy in solitude and poverty.
These occupations oftentimes deceived
The listless hours, while in the hollow vale,
Hollow and green, he lay on the green turf
In pensive idleness. What could he do,
Thus daily thirsting, in that lonesome life,
With blind endeavours? Yet, still uppermost,
Nature was at his heart as if he felt,
Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
In all things that from her sweet influence
Might tend to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.
While yet he lingered in the rudiments
Of science, and among her simplest laws,
His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
The silent stars! Oft did he take delight
To measure the altitude of some tall crag
That is the eagle's birth-place, or some peak
Familiar with forgotten years, that shows,
Inscribed upon its visionary sides,
The history of many a winter storm,
Or obscure records of the path of fire.

And thus before his eighteenth year was told,
Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
With still increasing weight; he was o'erpowered
By Nature; by the turbulence subdued
Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,
And the first virgin passion of a soul
Communing with the glorious universe.
Full often wished he that the winds might rage
When they were silent: far more fondly now
Than in his earlier season did he love
Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the sounds
That live in darkness. From his intellect
And from the stillness of abstracted thought
He asked repose; and, failing oft to win
The peace required, he scanned the laws of light
Amid the roar of torrents, where they send
From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
A cloud of mist that, smitten by the sun,
Varies its rainbow hues. But vainly thus,
And vainly by all other means, he strove
To mitigate the fever of his heart.

In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus was he reared; much wanting to assist
The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthened and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome, air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.
—But, from past liberty, and tried restraints,
He now was summoned to select the course
Of humble industry that promised best
To yield him no unworthy maintenance.
Urged by his Mother, he essayed to teach
A village-school—but wandering thoughts were then
A misery to him; and the Youth resigned
A task he was unable to perform.

That stern yet kindly Spirit, who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,
The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,
(Spirit attached to regions mountainous
Like their own stedfast clouds) did now impel
His restless mind to look abroad with hope.
—An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,
Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,
A vagrant Merchant under a heavy load,
Bent as he moves, and needing frequent rest;
Yet do such travellers find their own delight;
And their hard service, deemed debasing now

Gained merited respect in simpler times;
When squire, and priest, and they who round them dwelt
In rustic sequestration—all dependent
Upon the PEDLAR'S toil—supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.
Not ignorant was the Youth that still no few
Of his adventurous countrymen were led
By perseverance in this track of life
To competence and ease:—to him it offered
Attractions manifold;—and this he chose.
—His Parents on the enterprise bestowed
Their farewell benediction, but with hearts
Foreboding evil. From his native hills
He wandered far; much did he see of men,[1]
Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
Their passions and their feelings; chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
That, 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
Exist more simple in their elements,
And speak a plainer language. In the woods,
A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields,
Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
The better portion of his time; and there
Spontaneously had his affections thriven
Amid the bounties of the year, the peace
And liberty of nature; there he kept
In solitude and solitary thought
His mind in a just equipoise of love.
Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
Of ordinary life; unvexed, unwarped
By partial bondage. In his steady course,
No piteous revolutions had he felt,
No wild varieties of joy and grief.
Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
His heart lay open; and, by nature tuned
And constant disposition of his thoughts
To sympathy with man, he was alive
To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
And all that was endured; for, in himself
Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
He had no painful pressure from without
That made him turn aside from wretchedness
With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer
With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
That in our best experience he was rich,
And in the wisdom of our daily life.
For hence, minutely, in his various rounds,
He had observed the progress and decay
Of many minds, of minds and bodies too;
The history of many families;
How they had prospered; how they were o'erthrown
By passion or mischance, or such misrule
Among the unthinking masters of the earth
As makes the nations groan.
This active course
He followed till provision for his wants
Had been obtained;—the Wanderer then resolved
To pass the remnant of his days, untasked
With needless services, from hardship free.
His calling laid aside, he lived at ease:
But still he loved to pace the public roads
And the wild paths; and, by the summer's warmth
Invited, often would he leave his home
And journey far, revisiting the scenes
That to his memory were most endeared.
—Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, undamped
By worldly-mindedness or anxious care;
Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refreshed
By knowledge gathered up from day to day;
Thus had he lived a long and innocent life.

The Scottish Church, both on himself and those
With whom from childhood he grew up, had held
The strong hand of her purity; and still
Had watched him with an unrelenting eye.
This he remembered in his riper age
With gratitude, and reverential thoughts.
But by the native vigour of his mind,
By his habitual wanderings out of doors,
By loneliness, and goodness, and kind works,
Whate'er, in docile childhood or in youth,
He had imbibed of fear or darker thought
Was melted all away; so true was this,
That sometimes his religion seemed to me
Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods;
Who to the model of his own pure heart
Shaped his belief, as grace divine inspired,
And human reason dictated with awe.
—And surely never did there live on earth
A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports

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[1] See Note.

And teasing ways of children vexed not him;
Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale,
To his fraternal sympathy addressed,
Obtain reluctant hearing.
Plain his garb;
Such as might suit a rustic Sire, prepared
For sabbath duties; yet he was a man
Whom no one could have passed without remark.
Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs
And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek
Into a narrower circle of deep red,
But had not tamed his eye; that, under brows
Shaggy and grey, had meanings which it brought
From years of youth; which, like a Being made
Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill
To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was He framed; and such his course of life
Who now, with no appendage but a staff,
The prized memorial of relinquished toils,
Upon that cottage-bench reposed his limbs,
Screened from the sun. Supine the Wanderer lay,
His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut,
The shadows of the breezy elms above
Dappling his face. He had not heard the sound
Of my approaching steps, and in the shade
Unnoticed did I stand some minutes' space.
At length I hailed him, seeing that his hat
Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim
Had newly scooped a running stream. He rose,
And ere our lively greeting into peace
Had settled, "'Tis," said I, "a burning day:
My lips are parched with thirst, but you, it seems
Have somewhere found relief." He, at the word,
Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me climb
The fence where that aspiring shrub looked out
Upon the public way. It was a plot
Of garden ground run wild, its matted weeds
Marked with the steps of those, whom, as they passed,
The gooseberry trees that shot in long lank slips,
Or currants, hanging from their leafless stems,
In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap
The broken wall. I looked around, and there,
Where two tall hedge-rows of thick alder boughs
Joined in a cold damp nook, espied a well
Shrouded with willow-flowers and plumy fern.
My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerless spot
Withdrawing, straightway to the shade returned
Where sate the old Man on the cottage-bench;
And, while, beside him, with uncovered head,
I yet was standing, freely to respire,
And cool my temples in the fanning air,
Thus did he speak. "I see around me here
Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend,
Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon
Even of the good is no memorial left.
—The Poets, in their elegies and songs
Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
They call upon the hills and streams, to mourn,
And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they speak,
In these their invocations, with a voice
Obedient to the strong creative power
Of human passion. Sympathies there are
More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
That steal upon the meditative mind,
And grow with thought. Beside yon spring I stood,
And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
One sadness, they and I. For them a bond

Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
When, every day, the touch of human hand
Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
In mortal stillness; and they ministered
To human comfort. Stooping down to drink,
Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied
The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
Green with the moss of years, and subject only
To the soft handling of the elements:
There let it lie—how foolish are such thoughts!
Forgive them;—never—never did my steps
Approach this door but she who dwelt within
A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
As my own child. Oh, Sir! the good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
From that forsaken spring; and no one came
But he was welcome; no one went away
But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandoned to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave.

I speak," continued he, "of One whose stock
Of virtues bloomed beneath this lonely roof.
She was a Woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love;
Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
Her temper had been framed, as if to make
A Being, who by adding love to peace
Might live on earth a life of happiness.
Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side
The humble worth that satisfied her heart:
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
That he was often seated at his loom,
In summer, ere the mower was abroad
Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanished.—They who passed
At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
After his daily work, until the light
Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost
In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven.

Not twenty years ago, but you I think
Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
Two blighting seasons, when the fields were left
With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
A worse affliction in the plague of war:
This happy Land was stricken to the heart!
A Wanderer then among the cottages,
I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
The hardships of that season: many rich
Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor;
And of the poor did many cease to be,
And their place knew them not. Meanwhile, abridged
Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
To numerous self-denials, Margaret
Went struggling on through those calamitous years
With cheerful hope, until the second autumn,
When her life's Helpmate on a sick-bed lay,
Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
He lingered long; and, when his strength returned,
He found the little he had stored, to meet
The hour of accident or crippling age,
Was all consumed. A second infant now
Was added to the troubles of a time
Laden, for them and all of their degree,
With care and sorrow; shoals of artisans
From ill-requited labour turned adrift
Sought daily bread from public charity,
They, and their wives and children—happier far
Could they have lived as do the little birds
That peck along the hedge-rows, or the kite

That makes her dwelling on the mountain rocks!

A sad reverse it was for him who long
Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,
This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,
And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
That had no mirth in them; or with his knife
Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks—
Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
In house or garden, any casual work
Of use or ornament; and with a strange,
Amusing, yet uneasy, novelty,
He mingled, where he might, the various tasks
Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
But this endured not; his good humour soon
Became a weight in which no pleasure was:
And poverty brought on a petted mood
And a sore temper: day by day he drooped,
And he would leave his work—and to the town
Would turn without an errand his slack steps;
Or wander here and there among the fields.
One while he would speak lightly of his babes,
And with a cruel tongue: at other times
He tossed them with a false unnatural joy:
And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
Of the poor innocent children. 'Every smile,'
Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees,
'Made my heart bleed.'"
At this the Wanderer paused;
And, looking up to those enormous elms,
He said, "'Tis now the hour of deepest noon.
At this still season of repose and peace,
This hour when all things which are not at rest
Are cheerful; while this multitude of flies
With tuneful hum is filling all the air;
Why should a tear be on an old Man's cheek?
Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
And in the weakness of humanity,
From natural wisdom turn our hearts away;
To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears;
And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
The calm of nature with our restless thoughts?"

He spake with somewhat of a solemn tone:
But, when he ended, there was in his face
Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild,
That for a little time it stole away
All recollection; and that simple tale
Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound.
A while on trivial things we held discourse,
To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,
I thought of that poor Woman as of one
Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed
Her homely tale with such familiar power,
With such an active countenance, an eye
So busy, that the things of which he spake
Seemed present; and, attention now relaxed,
A heart-felt chillness crept along my veins
I rose; and, having left the breezy shade,
Stood drinking comfort from the warmer sun,
That had not cheered me long—ere, looking round
Upon that tranquil Ruin, I returned,
And begged of the old Man that, for my sake,
He would resume his story.

He replied,
"It were a wantonness, and would demand
Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
Even of the dead; contented thence to draw
A momentary pleasure, never marked
By reason, barren of all future good.
But we have known that there is often found
In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
A power to virtue friendly; were 't not so,
I am a dreamer among men, indeed
An idle dreamer! 'Tis a common tale,
An ordinary sorrow of man's life,
A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
In bodily form.—But without further bidding

I will proceed.
While thus it fared with them,
To whom this cottage, till those hapless years,
Had been a blessèd home, it was my chance
To travel in a country far remote;
And when these lofty elms once more appeared
What pleasant expectations lured me on
O'er the flat Common!—With quick step I reached
The threshold, lifted with light hand the latch;
But, when I entered, Margaret looked at me
A little while; then turned her head away
Speechless,—and, sitting down upon a chair,
Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Nor how to speak to her. Poor Wretch! at last
She rose from off her seat, and then,—O Sir!
I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name:—
With fervent love, and with a face of grief
Unutterably helpless, and a look
That seemed to cling upon me, she enquired
If I had seen her husband. As she spake
A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,
Nor had I power to answer ere she told
That he had disappeared—not two months gone.
He left his house: two wretched days had past,
And on the third, as wistfully she raised
Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
Like one in trouble, for returning light,
Within her chamber-casement she espied
A folded paper, lying as if placed
To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly
She opened—found no writing, but beheld
Pieces of money carefully enclosed,
Silver and gold. 'I shuddered at the sight,'
Said Margaret, 'for I knew it was his hand
That must have placed it there; and ere that day
Was ended, that long anxious day, I learned,
From one who by my husband had been sent
With the sad news, that he had joined a troop
Of soldiers, going to a distant land.
—He left me thus—he could not gather heart
To take a farewell of me; for he feared
That I should follow with my babes, and sink
Beneath the misery of that wandering life.'

This tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
And, when she ended, I had little power
To give her comfort, and was glad to take
Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
To cheer us both. But long we had not talked
Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
And with a brighter eye she looked around
As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
We parted.—'Twas the time of early spring;
I left her busy with her garden tools;
And well remember, o'er that fence she looked,
And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice
That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale,
With my accustomed load; in heat and cold,
Through many a wood and many an open ground,
In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
Drooping or blithe of heart, as might befall;
My best companions now the driving winds,
And now the 'trotting brooks' and whispering trees,
And now the music of my own sad steps,
With many a short-lived thought that passed between,
And disappeared.
I journeyed back this way,
When, in the warmth of midsummer, the wheat
Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass,
Springing afresh, had o'er the hay-field spread
Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,

I found that she was absent. In the shade,
Where now we sit, I waited her return.
Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
Its customary look,—only, it seemed,
The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
Hung down in heavier tufts; and that bright weed,
The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take root
Along the window's edge, profusely grew,
Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,
And strolled into her garden. It appeared
To lag behind the season, and had lost
Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and thrift
Had broken their trim border-lines, and straggled
O'er paths they used to deck: carnations, once
Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
For the peculiar pains they had required,
Declined their languid heads, wanting support.
The cumbrous bind-weed, with its wreaths and bells,
Had twined about her two small rows of peas,
And dragged them to the earth.
                                        Ere this an hour
Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps;
A stranger passed; and, guessing whom I sought,
He said that she was used to ramble far.—
The sun was sinking in the west; and now
I sate with sad impatience. From within
Her solitary infant cried aloud;
Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,
The voice was silent. From the bench I rose;
But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
The spot, though fair, was very desolate—
The longer I remained, more desolate:
And, looking round me, now I first observed
The corner stones, on either side the porch,
With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck o'er
With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep,
That fed upon the Common, thither came
Familiarly, and found a couching-place
Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
From these tall elms; the cottage-clock struck eight;—
I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
Her face was pale and thin—her figure, too,
Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she said,
'It grieves me you have waited here so long,
But, in good truth, I've wandered much of late;
And sometimes—to my shame I speak—have need
Of my best prayers to bring me back again.
While on the board she spread our evening meal,
She told me—interrupting not the work
Which gave employment to her listless hands—
That she had parted with her elder child;
To a kind master on a distant farm
Now happily apprenticed.—'I perceive
You look at me, and you have cause; to-day
I have been travelling far; and many days
About the fields I wander, knowing this
Only, that what I seek I cannot find;
And so I waste my time: for I am changed;
And to myself,' said she, 'have done much wrong
And to this helpless infant. I have slept
Weeping, and weeping have I waked; my tears
Have flowed as if my body were not such
As others are; and I could never die.
But I am now in mind and in my heart
More easy; and I hope,' said she, 'that God
Will give me patience to endure the things
Which I behold at home.'
                                        It would have grieved
Your very soul to see her. Sir, I feel
The story linger in my heart; I fear
'Tis long and tedious; but my spirit clings
To that poor Woman:—so familiarly
Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
And presence; and so deeply do I feel
Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
A momentary trance comes over me;
And to myself I seem to muse on One
By sorrow laid asleep; or borne away,
A human being destined to awake
To human life, or something very near
To human life, when he shall come again
For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have grieved

Your very soul to see her: evermore
Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward were cast;
And, when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
Her body was subdued. In every act
Pertaining to her house-affairs, appeared
The careless stillness of a thinking mind
Self-occupied; to which all outward things
Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
For her son's use, some tokens of regard,
Which with a look of welcome she received;
And I exhorted her to place her trust
In God's good love, and seek his help by prayer.
I took my staff, and, when I kissed her babe,
The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
With the best hope and comfort I could give:
She thanked me for my wish;—but for my hope
It seemed she did not thank me.
I returned,
And took my rounds along this road again
When on its sunny bank the primrose flower
Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring.
I found her sad and drooping: she had learned
No tidings of her husband; if he lived,
She knew not that he lived; if he were dead,
She knew not he was dead. She seemed the same
In person and appearance; but her house
Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence;
The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore
Had been piled up against the corner panes
In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
As they had chanced to fall. Her infant Babe
Had from his Mother caught the trick of grief,
And sighed among its playthings. I withdrew,
And once again entering the garden saw,
More plainly still, that poverty and grief
Were now come nearer to her: weeds defaced
The hardened soil, and knots of withered grass:
No ridges there appeared of clear black mould,
No winter greenness; of her herbs and flowers,
It seemed the better part was gnawed away
Or trampled into earth; a chain of straw,
Which had been twined about the slender stem
Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root;
The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
—Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms,
And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
She said, 'I fear it will be dead and gone
Ere Robert come again.' When to the House
We had returned together, she enquired
If I had any hope:—but for her babe
And for her little orphan boy, she said,
She had no wish to live, that she must die
Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
Still in its place; his Sunday garments hung
Upon the self-same nail; his very staff
Stood undisturbed behind the door.
And when,
In bleak December, I retraced this way,
She told me that her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone. She now, released
From her maternal cares, had taken up
The employment common through these wilds, and gained,
By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself;
And for this end had hired a neighbour's boy
To give her needful help. That very time
Most willingly she put her work aside,
And walked with me along the miry road,
Heedless how far; and, in such piteous sort

That any heart had ached to hear her, begged
That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
For him whom she had lost. We parted then—
Our final parting; for from that time forth
Did many seasons pass ere I returned
Into this tract again.
Nine tedious years;
From their first separation, nine long years,
She lingered in unquiet widowhood;
A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting! I have heard, my Friend,
That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
Alone, through half the vacant sabbath day;
And, if a dog passed by, she still would quit
The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench
For hours she sate; and evermore her eye
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey line;
There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn thread
With backward steps. Yet ever as there passed
A man whose garments showed the soldier's red,
Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
The little child who sate to turn the wheel
Ceased from his task; and she with faltering voice
Made many a fond enquiry; and when they,
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
That bars the traveller's road, she often stood,
And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully;
Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor Hut
Sank to decay; for he was gone, whose hand,
At the first nipping of October frost,
Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and alone;
Until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain,
Was sapped; and while she slept, the nightly damps
Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind,
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence; and still that length of road,
And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my Friend,—
In sickness she remained; and here she died;
Last human tenant of these ruined walls!"

The old Man ceased: he saw that I was moved;
From that low bench, rising instinctively
I turned aside in weakness, nor had power
To thank him for the tale which he had told.
I stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall
Reviewed that Woman's sufferings; and it seemed
To comfort me while with a brother's love
I blessed her in the impotence of grief.
Then towards the cottage I returned; and traced
Fondly, though with an interest more mild,
That secret spirit of humanity
Which, 'mid the calm oblivious tendencies
Of nature, 'mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
And silent overgrowings, still survived.
The old Man, noting this, resumed, and said,
"My Friend! enough to sorrow you have given,

The purposes of wisdom ask no more:
Nor more would she have craved as due to One
Who, in her worst distress, had ofttimes felt
The unbounded might of prayer; and learned, with soul
Fixed on the Cross, that consolation springs,
From sources deeper far than deepest pain,
For the meek Sufferer. Why then should we read
The forms of things with an unworthy eye?
She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o'er,
As once I passed, into my heart conveyed
So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
That passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain,
Nowhere, dominion o'er the enlightened spirit
Whose meditative sympathies repose
Upon the breast of Faith. I turned away,
And walked along my road in happiness."

He ceased. Ere long the sun declining shot
A slant and mellow radiance, which began
To fall upon us, while, beneath the trees,
We sate on that low bench: and now we felt,
Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.
A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,
A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,
At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
The old Man rose, and, with a sprightly mien
Of hopeful preparation, grasped his staff;
Together casting then a farewell look
Upon those silent walls, we left the shade;
And, ere the stars were visible, had reached
A village-inn,—our evening resting-place.

BOOK SECOND

THE SOLITARY

ARGUMENT

The Author describes his travels with the Wanderer, whose character is further illustrated—Morning scene, and View of a Village Wake—Wanderer's account of a Friend whom he purposes to visit—View, from an eminence, of the Valley which his Friend had chosen for his retreat—Sound of singing from below—A funeral procession—Descent into the Valley—Observations drawn from the Wanderer at sight of a book accidentally discovered in a recess in the Valley—Meeting with the Wanderer's friend, the Solitary—Wanderer's description of the mode of burial in this mountainous district—Solitary contrasts with this, that of the individual carried a few minutes before from the cottage—The cottage entered—Description of the Solitary's apartment—Repast there—View, from the window, of two mountain summits; and the Solitary's description of the companionship they afford him—Account of the departed inmate of the cottage—Description of a grand spectacle upon the mountains, with its effect upon the Solitary's mind—Leave the house

In days of yore how fortunately fared
The Minstrel! wandering on from hall to hall,
Baronial court or royal; cheered with gifts
Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise;
Now meeting on his road an armèd knight,
Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
Of a clear brook;—beneath an abbey's roof
One evening sumptuously lodged; the next,
Humbly in a religious hospital;
Or with some merry outlaws of the wood;
Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell.
Him, sleeping or awake, the robber spared;
He walked—protected from the sword of war
By virtue of that sacred instrument
His harp, suspended at the traveller's side;
His dear companion wheresoe'er he went
Opening from land to land an easy way
By melody, and by the charm of verse.
Yet not the noblest of that honoured Race
Drew happier, loftier, more empassioned, thoughts
From his long journeyings and eventful life,
Than this obscure Itinerant had skill
To gather, ranging through the tamer ground
Of these our unimaginative days;

Both while he trod the earth in humblest guise
Accoutred with his burthen and his staff;
And now, when free to move with lighter pace.

What wonder, then, if I, whose favourite school
Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes,
Looked on this guide with reverential love?
Each with the other pleased, we now pursued
Our journey, under favourable skies.
Turn wheresoe'er we would, he was a light
Unfailing: not a hamlet could we pass,
Rarely a house, that did not yield to him
Remembrances; or from his tongue call forth
Some way-beguiling tale. Nor less regard
Accompanied those strains of apt discourse,
Which nature's various objects might inspire;
And in the silence of his face I read
His overflowing spirit. Birds and beasts,
And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
The fowl domestic, and the household dog—
In his capacious mind, he loved them all:
Their rights acknowledging he felt for all.
Oft was occasion given me to perceive
How the calm pleasures of the pasturing herd
To happy contemplation soothed his walk;
How the poor brute's condition, forced to run
Its course of suffering in the public road,
Sad contrast! all too often smote his heart
With unavailing pity. Rich in love
And sweet humanity, he was, himself,
To the degree that he desired, beloved.
Smiles of good-will from faces that he knew
Greeted us all day long; we took our seats
By many a cottage-hearth, where he received
The welcome of an Inmate from afar,
And I at once forgot, I was a Stranger.
—Nor was he loth to enter raggèd huts,
Huts where his charity was blest; his voice
Heard as the voice of an experienced friend.
And, sometimes—where the poor man held dispute
With his own mind, unable to subdue
Impatience through inaptness to perceive
General distress in his particular lot;
Or cherishing resentment, or in vain
Struggling against it; with a soul perplexed,
And finding in herself no steady power
To draw the line of comfort that divides
Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
From the injustice of our brother men—
To him appeal was made as to a judge;
Who, with an understanding heart, allayed
The perturbation; listened to the plea;
Resolved the dubious point; and sentence gave
So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
With softened spirit, even when it condemned.

Such intercourse I witnessed, while we roved,
Now as his choice directed, now as mine;
Or both, with equal readiness of will,
Our course submitting to the changeful breeze
Of accident. But when the rising sun
Had three times called us to renew our walk,
My Fellow-traveller, with earnest voice,
As if the thought were but a moment old,
Claimed absolute dominion for the day.
We started—and he led me toward the hills,
Up through an ample vale, with higher hills
Before us, mountains stern and desolate;
But, in the majesty of distance, now
Set off, and to our ken appearing fair
Of aspect, with aërial softness clad,
And beautified with morning's purple beams.

The wealthy, the luxurious, by the stress
Of business roused, or pleasure, ere their time,
May roll in chariots, or provoke the hoofs
Of the fleet coursers they bestride, to raise
From earth the dust of morning, slow to rise;
And they, if blest with health and hearts at ease,
Shall lack not their enjoyment:—but how faint
Compared with ours! who, pacing side by side,
Could, with an eye of leisure, look on all
That we beheld; and lend the listening sense

To every grateful sound of earth and air;
Pausing at will—our spirits braced, our thoughts
Pleasant as roses in the thickets blown,
And pure as dew bathing their crimson leaves.

Mount slowly, sun! that we may journey long,
By this dark hill protected from thy beams!
Such is the summer pilgrim's frequent wish;
But quickly from among our morning thoughts
'Twas chased away: for, toward the western side
Of the broad vale, casting a casual glance,
We saw a throng of people; wherefore met?
Blithe notes of music, suddenly let loose
On the thrilled ear, and flags uprising, yield
Prompt answer; they proclaim the annual Wake,
Which the bright season favours.—Tabor and pipe
In purpose join to hasten or reprove
The laggard Rustic; and repay with boons
Of merriment a party-coloured knot,
Already formed upon the village-green.
—Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
By the broad hill, glistened upon our sight
That gay assemblage. Round them and above,
Glitter, with dark recesses interposed,
Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
Half-veiled in vapoury cloud, the silver steam
Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like a mast
Of gold, the Maypole shines; as if the rays
Of morning, aided by exhaling dew,
With gladsome influence could re-animate
The faded garlands dangling from its sides.

Said I, "The music and the sprightly scene
Invite us; shall we quit our road, and join
These festive matins?"—He replied, "Not loth
To linger I would here with you partake,
Not one hour merely, but till evening's close,
The simple pastimes of the day and place.
By the fleet Racers, ere the sun be set,
The turf of yon large pasture will be skimmed;
There, too, the lusty Wrestlers shall contend:
But know we not that he, who intermits
The appointed task and duties of the day,
Untunes full oft the pleasures of the day;
Checking the finer spirits that refuse
To flow when purposes are lightly changed?
A length of journey yet remains untraced:
Let us proceed." Then, pointing with his staff
Raised toward those craggy summits, his intent
He thus imparted:—
"In a spot that lies
Among yon mountain fastnesses concealed,
You will receive, before the hour of noon,
Good recompense, I hope, for this day's toil,
From sight of One who lives secluded there,
Lonesome and lost: of whom, and whose past life,
(Not to forestall such knowledge as may be
More faithfully collected from himself)
This brief communication shall suffice.

Though now sojourning there, he, like myself,
Sprang from a stock of lowly parentage
Among the wilds of Scotland, in a tract
Where many a sheltered and well-tended plant,
Bears, on the humblest ground of social life,
Blossoms of piety and innocence.
Such grateful promises his youth displayed:
And, having shown in study forward zeal,
He to the Ministry was duly called;
And straight, incited by a curious mind
Filled with vague hopes, he undertook the charge
Of Chaplain to a military troop
Cheered by the Highland bagpipe, as they marched
In plaided vest,—his fellow-countrymen.
This office filling, yet by native power
And force of native inclination made
An intellectual ruler in the haunts
Of social vanity, he walked the world,
Gay, and affecting graceful gaiety;

Lax, buoyant—less a pastor with his flock
Than a soldier among soldiers—lived and roamed
Where Fortune led:—and Fortune, who oft proves
The careless wanderer's friend, to him made known
A blooming Lady—a conspicuous flower,
Admired for beauty, for her sweetness praised;
Whom he had sensibility to love,
Ambition to attempt, and skill to win.

For this fair Bride, most rich in gifts of mind,
Nor sparingly endowed with worldly wealth,
His office he relinquished; and retired
From the world's notice to a rural home.
Youth's season yet with him was scarcely past,
And she was in youth's prime. How free their love,
How full their joy! 'Till, pitiable doom!
In the short course of one undreaded year
Death blasted all. Death suddenly o'erthrew
Two lovely Children—all that they possessed!
The Mother followed:—miserably bare
The one Survivor stood; he wept, he prayed
For his dismissal, day and night, compelled
To hold communion with the grave, and face
With pain the regions of eternity.
An uncomplaining apathy displaced
This anguish; and, indifferent to delight,
To aim and purpose, he consumed his days,
To private interest dead, and public care.
So lived he; so he might have died.
But now,
To the wide world's astonishment, appeared
A glorious opening, the unlooked-for dawn,
That promised everlasting joy to France!
Her voice of social transport reached even him!
He broke from his contracted bounds, repaired
To the great City, an emporium then
Of golden expectations, and receiving
Freights every day from a new world of hope.
Thither his popular talents he transferred;
And, from the pulpit, zealously maintained
The cause of Christ and civil liberty,
As one, and moving to one glorious end.
Intoxicating service! I might say
A happy service; for he was sincere
As vanity and fondness for applause,
And new and shapeless wishes, would allow.

That righteous cause (such power hath freedom) bound,
For one hostility, in friendly league,
Ethereal natures and the worst of slaves;
Was served by rival advocates that came
From regions opposite as heaven and hell.
One courage seemed to animate them all:
And, from the dazzling conquests daily gained
By their united efforts, there arose
A proud and most presumptuous confidence
In the transcendent wisdom of the age,
And her discernment; not alone in rights
And in the origin and bounds of power
Social and temporal; but in laws divine,
Deduced by reason, or to faith revealed.
An overweening trust was raised; and fear
Cast out, alike of person and of thing.
Plague from this union spread, whose subtle bane
The strongest did not easily escape;
And He, what wonder! took a mortal taint.
How shall I trace the change, how bear to tell
That he broke faith with them whom he had laid
In earth's dark chambers, with a Christian's hope!
An infidel contempt of holy writ
Stole by degrees upon his mind; and hence
Life, like that Roman Janus, double-faced;
Vilest hypocrisy—the laughing, gay
Hypocrisy, not leagued with fear, but pride.
Smooth words he had to wheedle simple souls;
But, for disciples of the inner school,
Old freedom was old servitude, and they
The wisest whose opinions stooped the least
To known restraints; and who most boldly drew
Hopeful prognostications from a creed,
That, in the light of false philosophy,
Spread like a halo round a misty moon,
Widening its circle as the storms advance.

His sacred function was at length renounced;
And every day and every place enjoyed
The unshackled layman's natural liberty;
Speech, manners, morals, all without disguise.
I do not wish to wrong him; though the course
Of private life licentiously displayed
Unhallowed actions—planted like a crown
Upon the insolent aspiring brow
Of spurious notions—worn as open signs
Of prejudice subdued—still he retained,
'Mid much abasement, what he had received
From nature, an intense and glowing mind.
Wherefore, when humbled Liberty grew weak,
And mortal sickness on her face appeared,
He coloured objects to his own desire
As with a lover's passion. Yet his moods
Of pain were keen as those of better men,
Nay keener, as his fortitude was less:
And he continued, when worse days were come,
To deal about his sparkling eloquence,
Struggling against the strange reverse with zeal
That showed like happiness. But, in despite
Of all this outside bravery, within,
He neither felt encouragement nor hope:
For moral dignity, and strength of mind,
Were wanting; and simplicity of life;
And reverence for himself; and, last and best,
Confiding thoughts, through love and fear of Him
Before whose sight the troubles of this world
Are vain, as billows in a tossing sea.

The glory of the times fading away—
The splendour, which had given a festal air
To self-importance, hallowed it, and veiled
From his own sight—this gone, he forfeited
All joy in human nature; was consumed,
And vexed, and chafed, by levity and scorn,
And fruitless indignation; galled by pride;
Made desperate by contempt of men who throve
Before his sight in power or fame, and won,
Without desert, what he desired; weak men,
Too weak even for his envy or his hate!
Tormented thus, after a wandering course
Of discontent, and inwardly opprest
With malady—in part, I fear, provoked
By weariness of life—he fixed his home,
Or, rather say, sate down by very chance,
Among these rugged hills; where now he dwells,
And wastes the sad remainder of his hours,
Steeped in a self-indulging spleen, that wants not
Its own voluptuousness;—on this resolved,
With this content, that he will live and die
Forgotten,—at safe distance from 'a world
Not moving to his mind.'"
These serious words
Closed the preparatory notices
That served my Fellow-traveller to beguile
The way, while we advanced up that wide vale.
Diverging now (as if his quest had been
Some secret of the mountains, cavern, fall
Of water, or some lofty eminence,
Renowned for splendid prospect far and wide)
We scaled, without a track to ease our steps,
A steep ascent; and reached a dreary plain,
With a tumultuous waste of huge hill tops
Before us; savage region! which I paced
Dispirited: when, all at once, behold!
Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,
A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
Among the mountains; even as if the spot
Had been from eldest time by wish of theirs
So placed, to be shut out from all the world!
Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn;
With rocks encompassed, save that to the south
Was one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close;
A quiet treeless nook, with two green fields,
A liquid pool that glittered in the sun,
And one bare dwelling; one abode, no more!
It seemed the home of poverty and toil,
Though not of want: the little fields, made green
By husbandry of many thrifty years,
Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland house.
—There crows the cock, single in his domain:

The small birds find in spring no thicket there
To shroud them; only from the neighbouring vales
The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill tops,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

Ah! what a sweet Recess, thought I, is here!
Instantly throwing down my limbs at ease
Upon a bed of heath;—full many a spot
Of hidden beauty have I chanced to espy
Among the mountains; never one like this;
So lonesome, and so perfectly secure;
Not melancholy—no, for it is green,
And bright, and fertile, furnished in itself
With the few needful things that life requires.
—In rugged arms how softly does it lie,
How tenderly protected! Far and near
We have an image of the pristine earth,
The planet in its nakedness: were this
Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
First, last, and single, in the breathing world,
It could not be more quiet; peace is here
Or nowhere; days unruffled by the gale
Of public news or private; years that pass
Forgetfully; uncalled upon to pay
The common penalties of mortal life,
Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain.

On these and kindred thoughts intent I lay
In silence musing by my Comrade's side,
He also silent; when from out the heart
Of that profound abyss a solemn voice,
Or several voices in one solemn sound,
Was heard ascending; mournful, deep, and slow
The cadence, as of psalms—a funeral dirge!
We listened, looking down upon the hut,
But seeing no one: meanwhile from below
The strain continued, spiritual as before;
And now distinctly could I recognise
These words:—"*Shall in the grave thy love be known,*
In death thy faithfulness?"—"God rest his soul!'
Said the old man, abruptly breaking silence,—
"He is departed, and finds peace at last!"

This scarcely spoken, and those holy strains
Not ceasing, forth appeared in view a band
Of rustic persons, from behind the hut
Bearing a coffin in the midst, with which
They shaped their course along the sloping side
Of that small valley, singing as they moved;
A sober company and few, the men
Bare-headed, and all decently attired!
Some steps when they had thus advanced, the dirge
Ended; and, from the stillness that ensued
Recovering, to my Friend I said, "You spake,
Methought, with apprehension that these rites
Are paid to Him upon whose shy retreat
This day we purposed to intrude.' —"I did so,
But let us hence, that we may learn the truth:
Perhaps it is not he but some one else
For whom this pious service is performed;
Some other tenant of the solitude."

So, to a steep and difficult descent
Trusting ourselves, we wound from crag to crag,
Where passage could be won; and, as the last
Of the mute train, behind the heathy top
Of that off-sloping outlet, disappeared,
I, more impatient in my downward course,
Had landed upon easy ground; and there
Stood waiting for my Comrade. When behold
An object that enticed my steps aside!
A narrow, winding, entry opened out
Into a platform—that lay, sheepfold-wise,
Enclosed between an upright mass of rock
And one old moss-grown wall;—a cool recess,
And fanciful! For where the rock and wall
Met in an angle, hung a penthouse, framed
By thrusting two rude staves into the wall
And overlaying them with mountain sods;
To weather-fend a little turf-built seat
Whereon a full-grown man might rest, nor dread
The burning sunshine, or a transient shower;
But the whole plainly wrought by children's hands!
Whose skill had thronged the floor with a proud show
Of baby-houses, curiously arranged;

Nor wanting ornament of walks between,
With mimic trees inserted in the turf,
And gardens interposed. Pleased with the sight,
I could not choose but beckon to my Guide,
Who, entering, round him threw a careless glance,
Impatient to pass on, when I exclaimed,
"Lo! what is here?" and, stooping down, drew forth
A book, that, in the midst of stones and moss
And wreck of party-coloured earthen-ware,
Aptly disposed, had lent its help to raise
One of those petty structures. "His it must be!"
Exclaimed the Wanderer, "cannot but be his,
And he is gone!" The book, which in my hand
Had opened of itself (for it was swoln
With searching damp, and seemingly had lain
To the injurious elements exposed
From week to week,) I found to be a work
In the French tongue, a Novel of Voltaire,
His famous Optimist. "Unhappy Man!"
Exclaimed my Friend:—"here then has been to him
Retreat within retreat, a sheltering-place
Within how deep a shelter! He had fits,
Even to the last, of genuine tenderness,
And loved the haunts of children: here, no doubt,
Pleasing and pleased, he shared their simple sports,
Or sate companionless; and here the book,
Left and forgotten in his careless way,
Must by the cottage-children have been found:
Heaven bless them, and their inconsiderate work!
To what odd purpose have the darlings turned
This sad memorial of their hapless friend!"

"Me," said I, "most doth it surprise, to find
Such book in such a place!"—"A book it is,"
He answered, "to the Person suited well,
Though little suited to surrounding things:
'Tis strange, I grant; and stranger still had been
To see the Man who owned it, dwelling here,
With one poor shepherd, far from all the world!—
Now, if our errand hath been thrown away,
As from these intimations I forebode,
Grieved shall I be—less for my sake than yours,
And least of all for him who is no more."

By this, the book was in the old Man's hand;
And he continued, glancing on the leaves
An eye of scorn:—"The lover," said he, "doomed
To love when hope hath failed him—whom no depth
Of privacy is deep enough to hide,
Hath yet his bracelet or his lock of hair,
And that is joy to him. When change of times
Hath summoned kings to scaffolds, do but give
The faithful servant, who must hide his head
Henceforth in whatsoever nook he may,
A kerchief sprinkled with his master's blood,
And he too hath his comforter. How poor,
Beyond all poverty how destitute,
Must that Man have been left, who, hither driven,
Flying or seeking, could yet bring with him
No dearer relique, and no better stay,
Than this dull product of a scoffer's pen,
Impure conceits discharging from a heart
Hardened by impious pride!—I did not fear
To tax you with this journey;"—mildly said
My venerable Friend, as forth we stepped
Into the presence of the cheerful light—
"For I have knowledge that you do not shrink
From moving spectacles;—but let us on."

So speaking, on he went, and at the word
I followed, till he made a sudden stand:
For full in view, approaching through a gate
That opened from the enclosure of green fields
Into the rough uncultivated ground,
Behold the Man whom he had fancied dead!
I knew from his deportment, mien, and dress,
That it could be no other; a pale face,

A meagre person, tall, and in a garb
Not rustic—dull and faded like himself!
He saw us not, though distant but few steps;
For he was busy, dealing, from a store
Upon a broad leaf carried, choicest strings
Of red ripe currants; gift by which he strove,
With intermixture of endearing words,
To soothe a Child, who walked beside him, weeping
As if disconsolate.—"They to the grave
Are bearing him, my Little-one," he said,
"To the dark pit; but he will feel no pain;
His body is at rest, his soul in heaven."

More might have followed—but my honoured Friend
Broke in upon the Speaker with a frank
And cordial greeting.—Vivid was the light
That flashed and sparkled from the other's eyes;
He was all fire: no shadow on his brow
Remained, nor sign of sickness on his face.
Hands joined he with his Visitant,—a grasp,
An eager grasp; and many moments' space—
When the first glow of pleasure was no more,
And, of the sad appearance which at once
Had vanished, much was come and coming back—
An amicable smile retained the life
Which it had unexpectedly received,
Upon his hollow cheek. "How kind," he said,
"Nor could your coming have been better timed;
For this, you see, is in our narrow world
A day of sorrow. I have here a charge"—
And, speaking thus, he patted tenderly
The sun-burnt forehead of the weeping child—
"A little mourner, whom it is my task
To comfort;—but how came ye?—if yon track
(Which doth at once befriend us and betray)
Conducted hither your most welcome feet,
Ye could not miss the funeral train—they yet
Have scarcely disappeared." "This blooming Child,"
Said the old Man, "is of an age to weep
At any grave or solemn spectacle,
Inly distressed or overpowered with awe,
He knows not wherefore;—but the boy to-day,
Perhaps is shedding orphan's tears; you also
Must have sustained a loss."—"The hand of Death,"
He answered, "has been here; but could not well
Have fallen more lightly, if it had not fallen
Upon myself."—The other left these words
Unnoticed, thus continuing—
"From yon crag,
Down whose steep sides we dropped into the vale,
We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn sound
Heard anywhere; but in a place like this
'Tis more than human! Many precious rites
And customs of our rural ancestry
Are gone, or stealing from us; this, I hope,
Will last for ever. Oft on my way have I
Stood still, though but a casual passenger,
So much I felt the awfulness of life,
In that one moment when the corse is lifted
In silence, with a hush of decency;
Then from the threshold moves with song of peace,
And confidential yearnings, towards its home,
Its final home on earth. What traveller—who—
(How far soe'er a stranger) does not own
The bond of brotherhood, when he sees them go,
A mute procession on the houseless road;
Or passing by some single tenement
Or clustered dwellings, where again they raise
The monitory voice? But most of all
It touches, it confirms, and elevates,
Then, when the body, soon to be consigned
Ashes to ashes, dust bequeathed to dust,
Is raised from the church-aisle, and forward borne
Upon the shoulders of the next in love,
The nearest in affection or in blood;
Yea, by the very mourners who had knelt
Beside the coffin, resting on its lid
In silent grief their unuplifted heads,
And heard meanwhile the Psalmist's mournful plaint,

And that most awful scripture which declares
We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed!
—Have I not seen—ye likewise may have seen—
Son, husband, brothers—brothers side by side,
And son and father also side by side,
Rise from that posture:—and in concert move,
On the green turf following the vested Priest,
Four dear supporters of one senseless weight,
From which they do not shrink, and under which
They faint not, but advance towards the open grave
Step after step—together, with their firm
Unhidden faces: he that suffers most,
He outwardly, and inwardly perhaps,
The most serene, with most undaunted eye!—
Oh! blest are they who live and die like these,
Loved with such love, and with such sorrow mourned!"

"That poor Man taken hence to-day," replied
The Solitary, with a faint sarcastic smile
Which did not please me, "must be deemed, I fear,
Of the unblest; for he will surely sink
Into his mother earth without such pomp
Of grief, depart without occasion given
By him for such array of fortitude.
Full seventy winters hath he lived, and mark!
This simple Child will mourn his one short hour,
And I shall miss him: scanty tribute! yet,
This wanting, he would leave the sight of men,
If love were his sole claim upon their care,
Like a ripe date which in the desert falls
Without a hand to gather it."
At this
I interposed, though loth to speak, and said,
"Can it be thus among so small a band
As ye must needs be here? in such a place
I would not willingly, methinks, lose sight
Of a departing cloud."—"'Twas not for love"—
Answered the sick Man with a careless voice—
"That I came hither; neither have I found
Among associates who have power of speech,
Nor in such other converse as is here,
Temptation so prevailing as to change
That mood, or undermine my first resolve."
Then, speaking in like careless sort, he said
To my benign Companion,—"Pity 'tis
That fortune did not guide you to this house
A few days earlier; then would you have seen
What stuff the Dwellers in a solitude,
That seems by Nature hollowed out to be
The seat and bosom of pure innocence,
Are made of; an ungracious matter this!
Which, for truth's sake, yet in remembrance too
Of past discussions with this zealous friend
And advocate of humble life, I now
Will force upon his notice; undeterred
By the example of his own pure course,
And that respect and deference which a soul
May fairly claim, by niggard age enriched
In what she most doth value, love of God
And his frail creature Man;—but ye shall hear.
I talk—and ye are standing in the sun
Without refreshment!"
Quickly had he spoken,
And, with light steps still quicker than his words,
Led toward the Cottage. Homely was the spot;
And, to my feeling, ere we reached the door,
Had almost a forbidding nakedness;
Less fair, I grant, even painfully less fair,
Than it appeared when from the beetling rock
We had looked down upon it. All within,
As left by the departed company,
Was silent; save the solitary clock
That on mine ear ticked with a mournful sound.—
Following our Guide we clomb the cottage-stairs
And reached a small apartment dark and low,
Which was no sooner entered than our Host

Said gaily, "This is my domain, my cell,
My hermitage, my cabin, what you will—
I love it better than a snail his house.
But now ye shall be feasted with our best."

So, with more ardour than an unripe girl
Left one day mistress of her mother's stores,
He went about his hospitable task.
My eyes were busy, and my thoughts no less,
And pleased I looked upon my grey-haired Friend,
As if to thank him; he returned that look,
Cheered, plainly, and yet serious. What a wreck
Had we about us! scattered was the floor,
And, in like sort, chair, window-seat, and shelf,
With books, maps, fossils, withered plants and flowers,
And tufts of mountain moss. Mechanic tools
Lay intermixed with scraps of paper, some
Scribbled with verse: a broken angling-rod
And shattered telescope, together linked
By cobwebs, stood within a dusty nook;
And instruments of music, some half-made,
Some in disgrace, hung dangling from the walls.
But speedily the promise was fulfilled;
A feast before us, and a courteous Host
Inviting us in glee to sit and eat.
A napkin, white as foam of that rough brook
By which it had been bleached, o'erspread the board;
And was itself half-covered with a store
Of dainties,—oaten bread, curd, cheese, and cream;
And cakes of butter curiously embossed,
Butter that had imbibed from meadow-flowers
A golden hue, delicate as their own
Faintly reflected in a lingering stream.
Nor lacked, for more delight on that warm day,
Our table, small parade of garden fruits,
And whortle-berries from the mountain side.
The Child, who long ere this had stilled his sobs,
Was now a help to his late comforter,
And moved, a willing Page, as he was bid,
Ministering to our need.
In genial mood,
While at our pastoral banquet thus we sate
Fronting the window of that little cell,
I could not, ever and anon, forbear
To glance an upward look on two huge Peaks
That from some other vale peered into this.
"Those lusty twins," exclaimed our host, "if here
It were your lot to dwell, would soon become
Your prized companions.—Many are the notes
Which, in his tuneful course, the wind draws forth
From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing shores;
And well those lofty brethren bear their part
In the wild concert—chiefly when the storm
Rides high; then all the upper air they fill
With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow,
Like smoke, along the level of the blast,
In mighty current; theirs, too, is the song
Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails;
And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon,
Methinks that I have heard them echo back
The thunder's greeting. Nor have nature's laws
Left them ungifted with a power to yield
Music of finer tone; a harmony,
So do I call it, though it be the hand
Of silence, though there be no voice;—the clouds,
The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
Motions of moonlight, all come thither—touch,
And have an answer—thither come, and shape
A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
And idle spirits:—there the sun himself,
At the calm close of summer's longest day,
Rests his substantial orb;—between those heights
And on the top of either pinnacle,
More keenly than elsewhere in night's blue vault,
Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
Than the mute agents stirring there:—alone
Here do I sit and watch——"
A fall of voice,

Regretted like the nightingale's last note,
Had scarcely closed this high-wrought strain of rapture
Ere with inviting smile the Wanderer said:
"Now for the tale with which you threatened us!"
"In truth the threat escaped me unawares:
Should the tale tire you, let this challenge stand
For my excuse. Dissevered from mankind,
As to your eyes and thoughts we must have seemed
When ye looked down upon us from the crag,
Islanders 'mid a stormy mountain sea,
We are not so;—perpetually we touch
Upon the vulgar ordinances of the world;
And he, whom this our cottage hath to-day
Relinquished, lived dependent for his bread
Upon the laws of public charity.
The Housewife, tempted by such slender gains
As might from that occasion be distilled,
Opened, as she before had done for me,
Her doors to admit this homeless Pensioner;
The portion gave of coarse but wholesome fare
Which appetite required—a blind dull nook,
Such as she had, the *kennel* of his rest!
This, in itself not ill, would yet have been
Ill borne in earlier life; but his was now
The still contentedness of seventy years.
Calm did he sit under the wide-spread tree
Of his old age: and yet less calm and meek,
Winningly meek or venerably calm,
Than slow and torpid; paying in this wise
A penalty, if penalty it were,
For spendthrift feats, excesses of his prime.
I loved the old Man, for I pitied him!
A task it was, I own, to hold discourse
With one so slow in gathering up his thoughts,
But he was a cheap pleasure to my eyes;
Mild, inoffensive, ready in *his* way,
And helpful to his utmost power: and there
Our housewife knew full well what she possessed!
He was her vassal of all labour, tilled
Her garden, from the pasture fetched her kine;
And, one among the orderly array
Of hay-makers, beneath the burning sun
Maintained his place; or heedfully pursued
His course, on errands bound, to other vales,
Leading sometimes an inexperienced child
Too young for any profitable task.
So moved he like a shadow that performed
Substantial service. Mark me now, and learn
For what reward!—The moon her monthly round
Hath not completed since our dame, the qeeen
Of this one cottage and this lonely dale,
Into my little sanctuary rushed—
Voice to a rueful treble humanized,
And features in deplorable dismay.
I treat the matter lightly, but, alas!
It is most serious: persevering rain
Had fallen in torrents; all the mountain tops
Were hidden, and black vapours coursed their sides;
This had I seen, and saw; but, till she spake,
Was wholly ignorant that my ancient Friend—
Who at her bidding, early and alone,
Had clomb aloft to delve the moorland turf
For winter fuel—to his noontide meal
Returned not, and now, haply, on the heights
Lay at the mercy of this raging storm.
'Inhuman!'—said I. 'was an old Man's life
Not worth the trouble of a thought?—alas!
This notice comes too late.' With joy I saw
Her husband enter—from a distant vale.
We sallied forth together; found the tools
Which the neglected veteran had dropped,
But through all quarters looked for him in vain.
We shouted—but no answer! Darkness fell
Without remission of the blast or shower,
And fears for our own safety drove us home.

I, who weep little, did, I will confess,
The moment I was seated here alone,
Honour my little cell with some few tears
Which anger and resentment could not dry.
All night the storm endured; and, soon as help
Had been collected from the neighbouring vale,

With morning we renewed our quest: the wind
Was fallen, the rain abated, but the hills
Lay shrouded in impenetrable mist;
And long and hopelessly we sought in vain:
Till, chancing on that lofty ridge to pass
A heap of ruin—almost without walls
And wholly without roof (the bleached remains
Of a small chapel, where, in ancient time,
The peasants of these lonely valleys used
To meet for worship on that central height)—
We there espied the object of our search,
Lying full three parts buried among tufts
Of heath-plant, under and above him strewn,
To baffle, as he might, the watery storm:
And there we found him breathing peaceably,
Snug as a child that hides itself in sport
'Mid a green hay-cock in a sunny field.
We spake—he made reply, but would not stir
At our entreaty; less from want of power
Than apprehension and bewildering thoughts.

So was he lifted gently from the ground,
And with their freight homeward the shepherds moved
Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
Far sinking into splendour—without end!
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems!
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified; on them, and on the coves
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapours had receded, taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky.
Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight!
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped.
Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state
Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power
For admiration and mysterious awe.
This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,
Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible—
I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
That which I *saw* was the revealed abode
Of Spirits in beatitude: my heart
Swelled in my breast—'I have been dead,' I cried,
'And now I live! Oh! wherefore *do* I live?'
And with that pang I prayed to be no more!—
—But I forget our Charge, as utterly
I then forgot him:—there I stood and gazed:
The apparition faded not away,
And I descended.
Having reached the house,
I found its rescued inmate safely lodged,
And in serene possession of himself,
Beside a fire whose genial warmth seemed met
By a faint shining from the heart, a gleam,
Of comfort, spread over his pallid face.
Great show of joy the housewife made, and truly
Was glad to find her conscience set at ease;

And not less glad, for sake of her good name,
That the poor Sufferer had escaped with life.
But, though he seemed at first to have received
No harm, and uncomplaining as before
Went through his usual tasks, a silent change
Soon showed itself: he lingered three short weeks;
And from the cottage hath been borne to-day.

So ends my dolorous tale, and glad I am
That it is ended." At these words he turned—
And, with blithe air of open fellowship,
Brought from the cupboard wine and stouter cheer,
Like one who would be merry. Seeing this,
My grey-haired Friend said courteously—"Nay, nay,
You have regaled us as a hermit ought;
Now let us forth into the sun!"—Our Host
Rose, though reluctantly, and forth we went.

BOOK THIRD

DESPONDENCY

ARGUMENT

Images in the Valley—Another Recess in it entered and described—Wanderer's sensations—Solitary's excited by the same objects—Contrast between these—Despondency of the Solitary gently reproved—Conversation exhibiting the Solitary's past and present opinions and feelings, till he enters upon his own History at length—His domestic felicity—Afflictions—Dejection—Roused by the French Revolution—Disappointment and disgust—Voyage to America—Disappointment and disgust pursue him—His return—His languor and depression of mind, from want of faith in the great truths of Religion, and want of confidence in the virtue of Mankind.

A HUMMING BEE—a little tinkling rill—
A pair of falcons wheeling on the wing,
In clamorous agitation, round the crest
Of a tall rock, their airy citadel—
By each and all of these the pensive ear
Was greeted, in the silence that ensued,
When through the cottage-threshold we had passed,
And, deep within that lonesome valley, stood
Once more beneath the concave of a blue
And cloudless sky.—Anon exclaimed our Host—
Triumphantly dispersing with the taunt
The shade of discontent which on his brow
Had gathered,—"Ye have left my cell,—but see
How Nature hems you in with friendly arms!
And by her help ye are my prisoners still.
But which way shall I lead you?—how contrive,
In spot so parsimoniously endowed,
That the brief hours, which yet remain, may reap
Some recompense of knowledge or delight?'
So saying, round he looked, as if perplexed;
And, to remove those doubts, my grey-haired Friend
Said—"Shall we take this pathway for our guide?—
Upward it winds, as if, in summer heats,
Its line had first been fashioned by the flock
Seeking a place of refuge at the root
Of yon black Yew-tree, whose protruded boughs
Darken the silver bosom of the crag,
From which she draws her meagre sustenance.
There in commodious shelter may we rest.
Or let us trace this streamlet to its source;
Feebly it tinkles with an earthy sound,
And a few steps may bring us to the spot
Where, haply, crowned with flowerets and green herbs,
The mountain infant to the sun comes forth,
Like human life from darkness."—A quick turn
Through a strait passage of encumbered ground,
Proved that such hope was vain:—for now we stood
Shut out from prospect of the open vale,
And saw the water, that composed this rill,
Descending, disembodied, and diffused
O'er the smooth surface of an ample crag,
Lofty, and steep, and naked as a tower.
All further progress here was barred;—And who,
Thought I, if master of a vacant hour,
Here would not linger, willingly detained?

Whether to such wild objects he were led
When copious rains have magnified the stream
Into a loud and white-robed waterfall,
Or introduced at this more quiet time.

Upon a semicirque of turf-clad ground,
The hidden nook discovered to our view
A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay
Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests
Fearless of winds and waves. Three several stones
Stood near, of smaller size, and not unlike
To monumental pillars: and, from these
Some little space disjoined a pair were seen,
That with united shoulders bore aloft
A fragment, like an altar, flat and smooth:
Barren the tablet, yet thereon appeared
A tall and shining holly, that had found
A hospitable chink, and stood upright,
As if inserted by some human hand
In mockery, to wither in the sun,
Or lay its beauty flat before a breeze,
The first that entered. But no breeze did now
Find entrance;—high or low appeared no trace
Of motion, save the water that descended,
Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock,
And softly creeping, like a breath of air,
Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.

"Behold a cabinet for sages built,
Which kings might envy!"—Praise to this effect
Broke from the happy old Man's reverend lip;
Who to the Solitary turned, and said,
"In sooth, with love's familiar privilege,
You have decried the wealth which is your own.
Among these rocks and stones, methinks, I see
More than the heedless impress that belongs
To lonely nature's casual work: they bear
A semblance strange of power intelligent,
And of design not wholly worn away.
Boldest of plants that ever faced the wind,
How gracefully that slender shrub looks forth
From its fantastic birth-place! And I own,
Some shadowy intimations haunt me here,
That in these shows a chronicle survives
Of purposes akin to those of Man,
But wrought with mightier arm than now prevails.
—Voiceless the stream descends into the gulf
With timid lapse;—and lo! while in this strait
I stand—the chasm of sky above my head
Is heaven's profoundest azure; no domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds to occupy,
Or to pass through; but rather an abyss
In which the everlasting stars abide;
And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day.
—Hail Contemplation! from the stately towers,
Reared by the industrious hand of human art
To lift thee high above the misty air
And turbulence of murmuring cities vast;
From academic groves, that have for thee
Been planted, hither come and find a lodge
To which thou mayst resort for holier peace,—
From whose calm centre thou, through height or depth,
Mayst penetrate, wherever truth shall lead;
Measuring through all degrees, until the scale
Of time and conscious nature disappear,
Lost in unsearchable eternity!"[1]

A pause ensued; and with minuter care
We scanned the various features of the scene:
And soon the Tenant of that lonely vale
With courteous voice thus spake—
"I should have grieved
Hereafter, not escaping self-reproach,
If from my poor retirement ye had gone
Leaving this nook unvisited: but, in sooth,
Your unexpected presence had so roused
My spirits, that they were bent on enterprise;
And, like an ardent hunter, I forgot,
Or, shall I say?—disdained, the game that lurks
At my own door. The shapes before our eyes
And their arrangement, doubtless must be deemed

[1] See Note.

The sport of Nature, aided by blind Chance
Rudely to mock the works of toiling Man.
And hence, this upright shaft of unhewn stone,
From Fancy, willing to set off her stores
By sounding titles, hath acquired the name
Of Pompey's pillar; that I gravely style
My Theban obelisk; and, there, behold
A Druid cromlech!—thus I entertain
The antiquarian humour, and am pleased
To skim along the surfaces of things,
Beguiling harmlessly the listless hours.
But if the spirit be oppressed by sense
Of instability, revolt, decay,
And change, and emptiness, these freaks of Nature
And her blind helper Chance, do *then* suffice
To quicken, and to aggravate—to feed
Pity and scorn, and melancholy pride,
Not less than that huge Pile (from some abyss
Of mortal power unquestionably sprung)
Whose hoary diadem of pendent rocks
Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind, round and round
Eddying within its vast circumference,
On Sarum's naked plain—than pyramid
Of Egypt, unsubverted, undissolved—
Or Syria's marble ruins towering high
Above the sandy desert, in the light
Of sun or moon.—Forgive me, if I say
That an appearance which hath raised your minds
To an exalted pitch (the self-same cause
Different effect producing) is for me
Fraught rather with depression than delight,
Though shame it were, could I not look around,
By the reflection of your pleasure, pleased.
Yet happier in my judgment, even than you
With your bright transports fairly may be deemed,
The wandering Herbalist,—who, clear alike
From vain, and, that worse evil, vexing thoughts,
Casts, if he ever chance to enter here,
Upon these uncouth Forms a slight regard
Of transitory interest, and peeps round
For some rare floweret of the hills, or plant
Of craggy fountain; what he hopes for wins,
Or learns, at least, that 'tis not to be won:
Then, keen and eager, as a fine-nosed hound,
By soul-engrossing instinct driven along
Through wood or open field, the harmless Man
Departs, intent upon his onward quest!—
Nor is that Fellow-wanderer, so deem I,
Less to be envied, (you may trace him oft
By scars which his activity has left
Beside our roads and pathways, though, thank Heaven!
This covert nook reports not of his hand)
He who with pocket-hammer smites the edge
Of luckless rock or prominent stone, disguised
In weather-stains or crusted o'er by Nature
With her first growths, detaching by the stroke
A chip or splinter—to resolve his doubts;
And, with that ready answer satisfied,
The substance classes by some barbarous name,
And hurries on; or from the fragments picks
His specimen, if but haply interveined
With sparkling mineral, or should crystal cube
Lurk in its cells—and thinks himself enriched,
Wealthier, and doubtless wiser, than before!
Intrusted safely each to his pursuit,
Earnest alike, let both from hill to hill
Range; if it please them, speed from clime to clime;
The mind is full—and free from pain their pastime."

"Then," said I, interposing, "One is near,
Who cannot but possess in your esteem
Place worthier still of envy. May I name,
Without offence, that fair-faced cottage-boy?
Dame Nature's pupil of the lowest form,
Youngest apprentice in the school of art!
Him, as we entered from the open glen,
You might have noticed, busily engaged,
Heart, soul, and hands,—in mending the defects
Left in the fabric of a leaky dam
Raised for enabling this penurious stream
To turn a slender mill (that new-made plaything)
For his delight—the happiest he of all!"

"Far happiest," answered the desponding Man,

"If, such as now he is, he might remain!
Ah! what avails imagination high
Or question deep? what profits all that earth,
Or heaven's blue vault, is suffered to put forth
Of impulse or allurement, for the Soul
To quit the beaten track of life, and soar
Far as she finds a yielding element
In past or future; far as she can go
Through time or space—if neither in the one,
Nor in the other region, nor in aught
That Fancy, dreaming o'er the map of things,
Hath placed beyond these penetrable bounds,
Words of assurance can be heard; if nowhere
A habitation, for consummate good,
Or for progressive virtue, by the search
Can be attained,—a better sanctuary
From doubt and sorrow, than the senseless grave?"

"Is this," the grey-haired Wanderer mildly said,
"The voice, which we so lately overheard,
To that same child, addressing tenderly
The consolations of a hopeful mind?
'*His body is at rest, his soul in heaven.*'
These were your words; and, verily, methinks
Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar."—
The Other, not displeased,
Promptly replied—"My notion is the same.
And I, without reluctance, could decline
All act of inquisition whence we rise,
And what, when breath hath ceased, we may become.
Here are we, in a bright and breathing world.
Our origin, what matters it? In lack
Of worthier explanation, say at once
With the American (a thought which suits
The place where now we stand) that certain men
Leapt out together from a rocky cave;
And these were the first parents of mankind:
Or, if a different image be recalled
By the warm sunshine, and the jocund voice
Of insects chirping out their careless lives
On these soft beds of thyme-besprinkled turf,
Choose, with the gay Athenian, a conceit
As sound—blithe race! whose mantles were bedecked
With golden grasshoppers, in sign that they
Had sprung, like those bright creatures, from the soil
Whereon their endless generations dwelt.
But stop!—these theoretic fancies jar
On serious minds: then, as the Hindoos draw
Their holy Ganges from a skiey fount,
Even so deduce the stream of human life
From seats of power divine; and hope, or trust,
That our existence winds her stately course
Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part
Of a living ocean; or, to sink engulfed,
Like Niger, in impenetrable sands
And utter darkness: thought which may be faced,
Though comfortless!—
Not of myself I speak:
Such acquiescence neither doth imply,
In me, a meekly-bending spirit soothed
By natural piety; nor a lofty mind,
By philosophic discipline prepared
For calm subjection to acknowledged law;
Pleased to have been, contented not to be.
Such palms I boast not;—no! to me, who find
Reviewing my past way, much to condemn,
Little to praise, and nothing to regret,
(Save some remembrances of dream-like joys
That scarcely seem to have belonged to me)
If I must take my choice between the pair
That rule alternately the weary hours,
Night is than day more acceptable; sleep
Doth, in my estimate of good, appear
A better state than waking; death than sleep:
Feelingly sweet is stillness after storm,
Though under covert of the wormy ground!

Yet be it said, in justice to myself,
That in more genial times, when I was free
To explore the destiny of human kind
(Not as an intellectual game pursued
With curious subtilty, from wish to cheat
Irksome sensations; but by love of truth
Urged on, or haply by intense delight
In feeding thought, wherever thought could feed)

I did not rank with those (too dull or nice,
For to my judgment such they then appeared,
Or too aspiring, thankless at the best)
Who, in this frame of human life, perceive
An object whereunto their souls are tied
In discontented wedlock; nor did e'er,
From me, those dark impervious shades, that hang
Upon the region whither we are bound,
Exclude a power to enjoy the vital beams
Of present sunshine.—Deities that float
On wings, angelic Spirits! I could muse
O'er what from eldest time we have been told
Of your bright forms and glorious faculties,
And with the imagination rest content,
Not wishing more; repining not to tread
The little sinuous path of earthly care,
By flowers embellished, and by springs refreshed.
—'Blow winds of autumn!—let your chilling breath
'Take the live herbage from the mead, and strip
'The shady forest of its green attire,—
'And let the bursting clouds to fury rouse
'The gentle brooks!—Your desolating sway,
'Sheds,' I exclaimed, 'no sadness upon me,
'And no disorder in your rage I find.
'What dignity, what beauty, in this change
'From mild to angry, and from sad to gay,
'Alternate and revolving! How benign,
'How rich in animation and delight,
'How bountiful these elements—compared
'With aught, as more desirable and fair,
'Devised by fancy for the golden age;
'Or the perpetual warbling that prevails
'In Arcady, beneath unaltered skies,
'Through the long year in constant quiet bound,
'Night hushed as night, and day serene as day!'
—But why this tedious record?—Age, we know
Is garrulous; and solitude is apt
To anticipate the privilege of Age,
From far ye come; and surely with a hope
Of better entertainment:—let us hence!"

Loth to forsake the spot, and still more loth
To be diverted from our present theme,
I said, "My thoughts, agreeing, Sir, with yours,
Would push this censure farther;—for, if smiles
Of scornful pity be the just reward
Of Poesy thus courteously employed
In framing models to improve the scheme
Of Man's existence, and recast the world,
Why should not grave Philosophy be styled,
Herself, a dreamer of a kindred stock,
A dreamer yet more spiritless and dull?
Yes, shall the fine immunities she boasts
Establish sounder titles of esteem
For her, who (all too timid and reserved
For onset, for resistance too inert,
Too weak for suffering, and for hope too tame)
Placed, among flowery gardens curtained round
With world-excluding groves, the brotherhood
Of soft Epicureans, taught—if they
The ends of being would secure, and win
The crown of wisdom—to yield up their souls
To a voluptuous unconcern, preferring
Tranquillity to all things. Or is she,"
I cried, "more worthy of regard, the Power,
Who, for the sake of sterner quiet, closed
The Stoic's heart against the vain approach
Of admiration, and all sense of joy?"

His countenance gave notice that my zeal
Accorded little with his present mind;
I ceased, and he resumed.—"Ah! gentle Sir,
Slight, if you will, the *means;* but spare to slight
The *end* of those, who did, by system, rank,
As the prime object of a wise man's aim,
Security from shock of accident,
Release from fear; and cherished peaceful days
For their own sakes, as mortal life's chief good,
And only reasonable felicity.
What motive drew, what impulse, I would ask,
Through a long course of later ages, drove,
The hermit to his cell in forest wide;
Or what detained him, till his closing eyes
Took their last farewell of the sun and stars,

Fast anchored in the desert?—Not alone
Dread of the persecuting sword, remorse,
Wrongs unredressed, or insults unavenged
And unavengeable, defeated pride,
Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
Friendship betrayed, affection unreturned,
Love with despair, or grief in agony;—
Not always from intolerable pangs
He fled; but, compassed round by pleasure, sighed
For independent happiness; craving peace,
The central feeling of all happiness,
Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
A breathing-time, vacation, or a truce,
But for its absolute self; a life of peace,
Stability without regret or fear;
That hath been, is, and shall be evermore!—
Such the reward he sought; and wore out life,
There, where on few external things his heart
Was set, and those his own; or, if not his,
Subsisting under nature's stedfast law.

What other yearning was the master tie
Of the monastic brotherhood, upon rock
Aërial, or in green secluded vale,
One after one, collected from afar,
An undissolving fellowship?—What but this,
The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity,
Inward and outward; humble, yet sublime:
The life where hope and memory are as one;
Where earth is quiet and her face unchanged
Save by the simplest toil of human hands
Or seasons' difference; the immortal Soul
Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed
To meditation in that quietness!—
Such was their scheme: and though the wished-for end
By multitudes was missed, perhaps attained
By none, they for the attempt, and pains employed,
Do, in my present censure, stand redeemed
From the unqualified disdain, that once
Would have been cast upon them by my voice
Delivering her decisions from the seat
Of forward youth—that scruples not to solve
Doubts, and determine questions, by the rules
Of inexperienced judgment, ever prone
To overweening faith; and is inflamed,
By courage, to demand from real life
The test of act and suffering, to provoke
Hostility—how dreadful when it comes,
Whether affliction be the foe, or guilt!

A child of earth, I rested, in that stage
Of my past course to which these thoughts advert,
Upon earth's native energies; forgetting
That mine was a condition which required
Nor energy, nor fortitude—a calm
Without vicissitude; which, if the like
Had been presented to my view elsewhere,
I might have even been tempted to despise.
But no—for the serene was also bright;
Enlivened happiness with joy o'erflowing,
With joy, and—oh! that memory should survive
To speak the word—with rapture! Nature's boon,
Life's genuine inspiration, happiness
Above what rules can teach, or fancy feign;
Abused, as all possessions *are* abused
That are not prized according to their worth.
And yet, what worth? what good is given to men,
More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven?
What joy more lasting than a vernal flower?—
None! 'tis the general plaint of human kind
In solitude: and mutually addressed
From each to all, for wisdom's sake:—This truth
The priest announces from his holy seat:
And, crowned with garlands in the summer grove,
The poet fits it to his pensive lyre.
Yet, ere that final resting-place be gained,
Sharp contradictions may arise, by doom
Of this same life, compelling us to grieve
That the prosperities of love and joy
Should be permitted, oft-times, to endure
So long, and be at once cast down for ever.
Oh! tremble, ye, to whom hath been assigned
A course of days composing happy months,
And they as happy years; the present still
So like the past, and both so firm a pledge

Of a congenial future, that the wheels
Of pleasure move without the aid of hope:
For Mutability is Nature's bane;
And slighted Hope *will* be avenged; and, when
Ye need her favours, ye shall find her not;
But in her stead—fear—doubt—and agony!"

This was the bitter language of the heart:
But, while he spake, look, gesture, tone of voice,
Though discomposed and vehement, were such
As skill and graceful nature might suggest
To a proficient of the tragic scene
Standing before the multitude, beset
With dark events. Desirous to divert
Or stem the current of the speaker's thoughts,
We signified a wish to leave that place
Of stillness and close privacy, a nook
That seemed for self-examination made;
Or, for confession, in the sinner's need,
Hidden from all men's view. To our attempt
He yielded not; but, pointing to a slope
Of mossy turf defended from the sun,
And on that couch inviting us to rest,
Full on that tender-hearted Man he turned
A serious eye, and his speech thus renewed.

"You never saw, your eyes did never look
On the bright form of Her whom once I loved:—
Her silver voice was heard upon the earth,
A sound unknown to you; else, honoured Friend!
Your heart had borne a pitiable share
Of what I suffered, when I wept that loss,
And suffer now, not seldom, from the thought
That I remember, and can weep no more.—
Stripped as I am of all the golden fruit
Of self-esteem; and by the cutting blasts
Of self-reproach familiarly assailed;
Yet would I not be of such wintry bareness
But that some leaf of your regard should hang
Upon my naked branches:—lively thoughts
Give birth, full often, to unguarded words;
I grieve that, in your presence, from my tongue
Too much of frailty hath already dropped;
But that too much demands still more.
You know,
Revered Compatriot—and to you, kind Sir,
(Not to be deemed a stranger, as you come
Following the guidance of these welcome feet
To our secluded vale) it may be told—
That my demerits did not sue in vain
To One on whose mild radiance many gazed
With hope, and all with pleasure. This fair Bride—
In the devotedness of youthful love,
Preferring me to parents, and the choir
Of gay companions, to the natal roof,
And all known places and familiar sights
(Resigned with sadness gently weighing down
Her trembling expectations, but no more
Than did to her due honour, and to me
Yielded, that day, a confidence sublime
In what I had to build upon)—this Bride,
Young, modest, meek, and beautiful, I led
To a low cottage in a sunny bay,
Where the salt sea innocuously breaks,
And the sea breeze as innocently breathes,
On Devon's leafy shores;—a sheltered hold,
In a soft clime encouraging the soil
To a luxuriant bounty!—As our steps
Approach the embowered abode—our chosen seat—
See, rooted in the earth, her kindly bed,
The unendangered myrtle, decked with flowers,
Before the threshold stands to welcome us!
While, in the flowering myrtle's neighbourhood,
Not overlooked but courting no regard,
Those native plants, the holly and the yew,
Gave modest intimation to the mind
How willingly their aid they would unite
With the green myrtle, to endear the hours
Of winter, and protect that pleasant place.
—Wild were the walks upon those lonely Downs,
Track leading into track; how marked, how worn
Into bright verdure, between fern and gorse
Winding away its never-ending line
On their smooth surface, evidence was none;
But, there, lay open to our daily haunt,
A range of unappropriated earth,
Where youth's ambitious feet might move at large;

Whence, unmolested wanderers, we beheld
The shining giver of the day diffuse
His brightness o'er a tract of sea and land
Gay as our spirits, free as our desires;
As our enjoyments, boundless.—From those heights
We dropped, at pleasure, into sylvan combs;
Where arbours of impenetrable shade,
And mossy seats, detained us side by side,
With hearts at ease, and knowledge in our hearts
'That all the grove and all the day was ours.'

O happy time! still happier was at hand;
For Nature called my Partner to resign
Her share in the pure freedom of that life,
Enjoyed by us in common.—To my hope,
To my heart's wish, my tender Mate became
The thankful captive of maternal bonds;
And those wild paths were left to me alone.
There could I meditate on follies past;
And, like a weary voyager escaped
From risk and hardship, inwardly retrace
A course of vain delights and thoughtless guilt,
And self-indulgence—without shame pursued.
There, undisturbed, could think of and could thank
Her whose submissive spirit was to me
Rule and restraint—my guardian—shall I say
That earthly Providence, whose guiding love
Within a port of rest had lodged me safe;
Safe from temptation, and from danger far?
Strains followed of acknowledgment addressed
To an authority enthroned above
The reach of sight; from whom, as from their source
Proceed all visible ministers of good
That walk the earth—Father of heaven and earth,
Father, and king, and judge, adored and feared!
These acts of mind, and memory, and heart,
And spirit—interrupted and relieved
By observations transient as the glance
Of flying sunbeams, or to the outward form
Cleaving with power inherent and intense,
As the mute insect fixed upon the plant
On whose soft leaves it hangs, and from whose cup
It draws its nourishment imperceptibly—
Endeared my wanderings; and the mother's kiss
And infant's smile awaited my return.

In privacy we dwelt, a wedded pair,
Companions daily, often all day long;
Not placed by fortune within easy reach
Of various intercourse, nor wishing aught
Beyond the allowance of our own fire-side,
The twain within our happy cottage born,
Inmates, and heirs of our united love;
Graced mutually by difference of sex,
And with no wider interval of time
Between their several births than served for one
To establish something of a leader's sway;
Yet left them joined by sympathy in age;
Equals in pleasure, fellows in pursuit.
On these two pillars rested as in air
Our solitude.
It soothes me to perceive,
Your courtesy withholds not from my words
Attentive audience. But, oh! gentle Friends,
As times of quiet and unbroken peace,
Though, for a nation, times of blessedness,
Give back faint echoes from the historian's page;
So, in the imperfect sounds of this discourse,
Depressed I hear, how faithless is the voice
Which those most blissful days reverberate.
What special record can, or need, be given
To rules and habits, whereby much was done,
But all within the sphere of little things;
Of humble, though, to us, important cares,
And precious interests? Smoothly did our life
Advance, swerving not from the path prescribed;
Her annual, her diurnal, round alike
Maintained with faithful care. And you divine
The worst effects that our condition saw
If you imagine changes slowly wrought,
And in their progress unperceivable;
Not wished for; sometimes noticed with a sigh,

(Whate'er of good or lovely they might bring)
Sighs of regret, for the familiar good
And loveliness endeared which they removed.

Seven years of occupation undisturbed
Established seemingly a right to hold
That happiness; and use and habit gave,
To what an alien spirit had acquired,
A patrimonial sanctity. And thus,
With thoughts and wishes bounded to this world,
I lived and breathed; most grateful—if to enjoy
Without repining or desire for more,
For different lot, or change to higher sphere,
(Only except some impulses of pride
With no determined object, though upheld
By theories with suitable support)—
Most grateful, if in such wise to enjoy
Be proof of gratitude for what we have;
Else, I allow, most thankless.—But, at once,
From some dark seat of fatal power was urged
A claim that shattered all.—Our blooming girl,
Caught in the gripe of death, with such brief time
To struggle in as scarcely would allow
Her cheek to change its colour, was conveyed
From us to inaccessible worlds, to regions
Where height, or depth, admits not the approach
Of living man, though longing to pursue.
—With even as brief a warning—and how soon,
With what short interval of time between,
I tremble yet to think of—our last prop,
Our happy life's only remaining stay—
The brother followed; and was seen no more!

Calm as a frozen lake when ruthless winds
Blow fiercely, agitating earth and sky,
The Mother now remained; as if in her,
Who, to the lowest region of the soul,
Had been erewhile unsettled and disturbed,
This second visitation had no power
To shake; but only to bind up and seal;
And to establish thankfulness of heart
In Heaven's determinations, ever just.
The eminence whereon her spirit stood,
Mine was unable to attain. Immense
The space that severed us! But, as the sight
Communicates with heaven's ethereal orbs
Incalculably distant; so, I felt
That consolation may descend from far
(And that is intercourse, and union, too,)
While, overcome with speechless gratitude,
And, with a holier love inspired, I looked
On her—at once superior to my woes
And partner of my loss.—O heavy change,
Dimness o'er this clear luminary crept
Insensibly;—the immortal and divine
Yielded to mortal reflux; her pure glory,
As from the pinnacle of worldly state
Wretched ambition drops astounded, fell
Into a gulf obscure of silent grief,
And keen heart-anguish—of itself ashamed,
Yet obstinately cherishing itself:
And, so consumed, she melted from my arms;
And left me, on this earth, disconsolate!

What followed cannot be reviewed in thought;
Much less, retraced in words. If she, of life
Blameless, so intimate with love and joy
And all the tender motions of the soul,
Had been supplanted, could I hope to stand—
Infirm, dependent, and now destitute?
I called on dreams and visions, to disclose
That which is veiled from waking thought; conjured
Eternity, as men constrain a ghost
To appear and answer; to the grave I spake
Imploringly;—looked up, and asked the Heavens
If Angels traversed their cerulean floors,
If fixed or wandering star could tidings yield
Of the departed spirit—what abode
It occupies—what consciousness retains
Of former loves and interests. Then my soul
Turned inward,—to examine of what stuff
Time's fetters are composed; and life was put
To inquisition, long and profitless!
By pain of heart—now checked—and now impelled—
The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way!
And from those transports, and these toils abstruse,

Some trace am I enabled to retain
Of time, else lost;—existing unto me
Only by records in myself not found.

From that abstraction I was roused,—and how?
Even as a thoughtful shepherd by a flash
Of lightning startled in a gloomy cave
Of these wild hills. For, lo! the dread Bastile,
With all the chambers in its horrid towers,
Fell to the ground:—by violence overthrown
Of indignation; and with shouts that drowned
The crash it made in falling! From the wreck
A golden palace rose, or seemed to rise,
The appointed seat of equitable law
And mild paternal sway. The potent shock
I felt: the transformation I perceived,
As marvellously seized as in that moment
When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld
Glory—beyond all glory ever seen,
Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
Dazzling the soul. Meanwhile, prophetic harps
In every grove were ringing, 'War shall cease;
'Did ye not hear that conquest is abjured?
'Bring garlands, bring forth choicest flowers, to deck
'The tree of Liberty.'—My heart rebounded;
My melancholy voice the chorus joined;
—'Be joyful all ye nations; in all lands,
'Ye that are capable of joy be glad!
'Henceforth, whate'er is wanting to yourselves
'In others ye shall promptly find;—and all,
'Enriched by mutual and reflected wealth,
'Shall with one heart honour their common kind.'

Thus was I reconverted to the world;
Society became my glittering bride,
And airy hopes my children.—From the depths
Of natural passion, seemingly escaped,
My soul diffused herself in wide embrace
Of institutions, and the forms of things;
As they exist, in mutable array,
Upon life's surface. What, though in my veins
There flowed no Gallic blood, nor had I breathed
The air of France, not less than Gallic zeal
Kindled and burnt among the sapless twigs
Of my exhausted heart. If busy men
In sober conclave met, to weave a web
Of amity, whose living threads should stretch
Beyond the seas, and to the farthest pole,
There did I sit, assisting. If, with noise
And acclamation, crowds in open air
Expressed the tumult of their minds, my voice
There mingled, heard or not. The powers of song
I left not uninvoked; and, in still groves,
Where mild enthusiasts tuned a pensive lay
Of thanks and expectation, in accord
With their belief, I sang Saturnian rule
Returned,—a progeny of golden years
Permitted to descend, and bless mankind.
—With promises the Hebrew Scriptures teem:
I felt their invitation; and resumed
A long-suspended office in the House
Of public worship, where, the glowing phrase
Of ancient inspiration serving me,
I promised also,—with undaunted trust
Foretold, and added prayer to prophecy;
The admiration winning of the crowd;
The help desiring of the pure devout.

Scorn and contempt forbid me to proceed!
But History, time's slavish scribe, will tell
How rapidly the zealots of the cause
Disbanded—or in hostile ranks appeared;
Some, tired of honest service; these, outdone,
Disgusted therefore, or appalled, by aims
Of fiercer zealots—so confusion reigned,
And the more faithful were compelled to exclaim,
As Brutus did to Virtue, 'Liberty,
'I worshipped thee, and find thee but a Shade!'

Such recantation had for me no charm,
Nor would I bend to it; who should have grieved

At aught, however fair, that bore the mien
Of a conclusion, or catastrophe.
Why then conceal, that, when the simply good
In timid selfishness withdrew, I sought
Other support, not scrupulous whence it came;
And, by what compromise it stood, not nice?
Enough if notions seemed to be high-pitched,
And qualities determined.—Among men
So charactered did I maintain a strife
Hopeless, and still more hopeless every hour;
But, in the process, I began to feel
That, if the emancipation of the world
Were missed, I should at least secure my own,
And be in part compensated. For rights,
Widely—inveterately usurped upon,
I spake with vehemence; and promptly seized
All that Abstraction furnished for my needs
Or purposes; nor scrupled to proclaim,
And propagate, by liberty of life,
Those new persuasions. Not that I rejoiced,
Or even found pleasure, in such vagrant course,
For its own sake; but farthest from the walk
Which I had trod in happiness and peace,
Was most inviting to a troubled mind;
That, in a struggling and distempered world,
Saw a seductive image of herself.
Yet, mark the contradictions of which Man
Is still the sport! Here Nature was my guide,
The Nature of the dissolute; but thee,
O fostering Nature! I rejected—smiled
At others' tears in pity; and in scorn
At those, which thy soft influence sometimes drew
From my unguarded heart.—The tranquil shores
Of Britain circumscribed me; else, perhaps
I might have been entangled among deeds,
Which, now, as infamous, I should abhor—
Despise, as senseless: for my spirit relished
Strangely the exasperation of that Land,
Which turned an angry beak against the down
Of her own breast; confounded into hope
Of disencumbering thus her fretful wings.

But all was quieted by iron bonds
Of military sway. The shifting aims,
The moral interests, the creative might,
The varied functions and high attributes
Of civil action, yielded to a power
Formal, and odious, and contemptible.
—In Britain, ruled a panic dread of change;
The weak were praised, rewarded, and advanced;
And, from the impulse of a just disdain,
Once more did I retire into myself.
There feeling no contentment, I resolved
To fly, for safeguard, to some foreign shore,
Remote from Europe; from her blasted hopes;
Her fields of carnage, and polluted air.

Fresh blew the wind, when o'er the Atlantic Main
The ship went gliding with her thoughtless crew;
And who among them but an Exile, freed
From discontent, indifferent, pleased to sit
Among the busily-employed, not more
With obligation charged, with service taxed,
Than the loose pendant—to the idle wind
Upon the tall mast streaming. But, ye Powers
Of soul and sense mysteriously allied,
Oh, never let the Wretched, if a choice
Be left him, trust the freight of his distress
To a long voyage on the silent deep!
For, like a plague, will memory break out;
And, in the blank and solitude of things,
Upon his spirit, with a fever's strength,
Will conscience prey.—Feebly must they have felt
Who, in old time, attired with snakes and whips
The vengeful Furies. *Beautiful* regards
Were turned on me—the face of her I loved;
The Wife and Mother pitifully fixing
Tender reproaches, insupportable!
Where now that boasted liberty? No welcome
From unknown objects I received; and those,
Known and familiar, which the vaulted sky
Did, in the placid clearness of the night,
Disclose, had accusations to prefer

Against my peace. Within the cabin stood
That volume—as a compass for the soul—
Revered among the nations. I implored
Its guidance; but the infallible support
Of faith was wanting. Tell me, why refused
To One by storms annoyed and adverse winds;
Perplexed with currents; of his weakness sick;
Of vain endeavours tired; and by his own,
And by his nature's, ignorance, dismayed!

Long-wished-for sight, the Western World appeared;
And, when the ship was moored, I leaped ashore
Indignantly—resolved to be a man,
Who, having o'er the past no power, would live
No longer in subjection to the past,
With abject mind—from a tyrannic lord
Inviting penance, fruitlessly endured:
So, like a fugitive, whose feet have cleared
Some boundary, which his followers may not cross
In prosecution of their deadly chase,
Respiring I looked round.—How bright the sun,
The breeze how soft! Can anything produced
In the old World compare, thought I, for power
And majesty with this gigantic stream,
Sprung from the desert? And behold a city
Fresh, youthful, and aspiring! What are these
To me, or I to them? As much at least
As he desires that they should be, whom winds
And waves have wafted to this distant shore,
In the condition of a damaged seed,
Whose fibres cannot, if they would, take root.
Here may I roam at large;—my business is,
Roaming at large, to observe, and not to feel,
And, therefore, not to act—convinced that all
Which bears the name of action, howsoe'er
Beginning, ends in servitude—still painful,
And mostly profitless. And, sooth to say,
On nearer view, a motley spectacle
Appeared, of high pretensions,—unreproved
But by the obstreperous voice of higher still;
Big passions strutting on a petty stage;
Which a detached spectator may regard
Not unamused.—But ridicule demands
Quick change of objects; and, to laugh alone,
At a composing distance from the haunts
Of strife and folly, though it be a treat
As choice as musing Leisure can bestow;
Yet, in the very centre of the crowd,
To keep the secret of a poignant scorn,
Howe'er to airy Demons suitable,
Of all unsocial courses, is least fit
For the gross spirit of mankind,—the one
That soonest fails to please, and quickliest turns
Into vexation.
                        Let us, then, I said,
Leave this unknit Republic to the scourge
Of her own passions; and to regions haste,
Whose shades have never felt the encroaching axe,
Or soil endured a transfer in the mart
Of dire rapacity. There, Man abides,
Primeval Nature's child. A creature weak
In combination, (wherefore else driven back
So far, and of his old inheritance
So easily deprived?) but, for that cause,
More dignified, and stronger in himself;
Whether to act, judge, suffer, or enjoy.
True, the intelligence of social art
Hath overpowered his forefathers, and soon
Will sweep the remnant of his line away;
But contemplations, worthier, nobler far
Than her destructive energies, attend
His independence, when along the side
Of Mississippi, or that northern stream[1]
That spreads into successive seas, he walks;
Pleased to perceive his own unshackled life,
And his innate capacities of soul,
There imaged: or when, having gained the top
Of some commanding eminence, which yet
Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys
Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast
Expanse of unappropriated earth,
With mind that sheds a light on what he sees;
Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun,
Pouring above his head its radiance down
Upon a living and rejoicing world!

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[1] See Note.

So, westward, tow'rd the unviolated woods
I bent my way; and, roaming far and wide,
Failed not to greet the merry Mocking-bird;
And, while the melancholy Muccawiss
(The sportive bird's companion in the grove)
Repeated, o'er and o'er, his plaintive cry,
I sympathised at leisure with the sound;
But that pure archetype of human greatness,
I found him not. There, in his stead, appeared
A creature, squalid, vengeful, and impure;
Remorseless, and submissive to no law
But superstitious fear, and abject sloth.

Enough is told! Here am I—ye have heard
What evidence I seek, and vainly seek;
What from my fellow-beings I require,
And either they have not to give, or I
Lack virtue to receive; what I myself,
Too oft by wilful forfeiture, have lost
Nor can regain. How languidly I look
Upon this visible fabric of the world,
May be divined—perhaps it hath been said:—
But spare your pity, if there be in me
Aught that deserves respect: for I exist,
Within myself, not comfortless.—The tenor
Which my life holds, he readily may conceive
Whoe'er hath stood to watch a mountain brook
In some still passage of its course, and seen,
Within the depths of its capacious breast,
Inverted trees, rocks, clouds, and azure sky;
And, on its glassy surface, specks of foam,
And conglobated bubbles undissolved,
Numerous as stars; that, by their onward lapse,
Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
Else imperceptible. Meanwhile, is heard
A softened roar, or murmur; and the sound
Though soothing, and the little floating isles
Though beautiful, are both by Nature charged
With the same pensive office; and make known
Through what perplexing labyrinths, abrupt
Precipitations, and untoward straits,
The earth-born wanderer hath passed; and quickly,
That respite o'er, like traverses and toils
Must he again encounter.—Such a stream
Is human Life; and so the Spirit fares
In the best quiet to her course allowed;
And such is mine,—save only for a hope
That my particular current soon will reach
The unfathomable gulf, where all is still!"

BOOK FOURTH

DESPONDENCY CORRECTED

ARGUMENT

State of feeling produced by the foregoing Narrative—A belief in a superintending Providence the only adequate support under affliction—Wanderer's ejaculation—Acknowledges the difficulty of a lively faith—Hence immoderate sorrow—Exhortations—How received—Wanderer applies his discourse to that other cause of dejection in the Solitary's mind—Disappointment from the French Revolution—States grounds of hope, and insists on the necessity of patience and fortitude with respect to the course of great revolutions—Knowledge the source of tranquillity—Rural Solitude favourable to knowledge of the inferior Creatures; Study of their habits and ways recommended; exhortation to bodily exertion and communion with Nature—Morbid Solitude pitiable—Superstition better than apathy—Apathy and destitution unknown in the infancy of society—The various modes of Religion prevented it—Illustrated in the Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, Chaldean, and Grecian modes of belief—Solitary interposes—Wanderer points out the influence of religious and imaginative feeling in the humble ranks of society, illustrated from present and past times—These principles tend to recall exploded superstitions and popery—Wanderer rebuts this charge, and contrasts the dignities of the Imagination with the presumptuous littleness of certain modern Philosophers—Recommends other lights and guides—Asserts the power of the soul to regenerate herself; Solitary asks how—Reply—Personal appeal—Exhortation to activity of body renewed—How to commune with Nature—Wanderer concludes with a legitimate union of the imagination, affections, understanding, and reason—Effect of his discourse—Evening; Return to the Cottage.

HERE closed the Tenant of that lonely vale
His mournful narrative—commenced in pain,
In pain commenced, and ended without peace:
Yet tempered, not unfrequently, with strains

Of native feeling, grateful to our minds;
And yielding surely some relief to his,
While we sate listening with compassion due.
A pause of silence followed; then, with voice
That did not falter though the heart was moved,
The Wanderer said:—
"One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only; an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power;
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.
—The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat
Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will supreme
For time and for eternity; by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defence that lies in boundless love
Of his perfections; with habitual dread
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,
To the dishonour of his holy name.
Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the world!
Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart;
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto thee and thine!"

Then, as we issued from that covert nook,
He thus continued, lifting up his eyes
To heaven:—"How beautiful this dome of sky;
And the vast hills, in fluctuation fixed
At thy command, how awful! Shall the Soul,
Human and rational, report of thee
Even less than these?—Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice:
My lips, that may forget thee in the crowd,
Cannot forget thee here; where thou hast built,
For thy own glory, in the wilderness!
Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine,
In such a temple as we now behold
Reared for thy presence: therefore, am I bound
To worship, here, and everywhere—as one
Not doomed to ignorance, though forced to tread,
From childhood up, the ways of poverty;
From unreflecting ignorance preserved,
And from debasement rescued.—By thy grace
The particle divine remained unquenched;
And, 'mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless flowers,
From paradise transplanted: wintry age
Impends; the frost will gather round my heart;
If the flowers wither, I am worse than dead!
—Come, labour, when the worn-out frame requires
Perpetual sabbath; come, disease and want;
And sad exclusion through decay of sense;
But leave me unabated trust in thee—
And let thy favour, to the end of life,
Inspire me with ability to seek
Repose and hope among eternal things—
Father of heaven and earth! and I am rich,
And will possess my portion in content!

And what are things eternal?—powers depart,"
The grey-haired Wanderer stedfastly replied,
Answering the question which himself had asked,
"Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat:
But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
Duty exists;—immutably survive,
For our support, the measures and the forms,
Which an abstract intelligence supplies;
Whose kingdom is, where time and space are not.
Of other converse which mind, soul, and heart,
Do, with united urgency, require,
What more that may not perish?—Thou, dread source,
Prime, self-existing cause and end of all
That in the scale of being fill their place;
Above our human region, or below,
Set and sustained;—thou, who didst wrap the cloud

Of infancy around us, that thyself,
Therein, with our simplicity awhile
Might'st hold, on earth, communion undisturbed;
Who from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
Or from its death-like void, with punctual care,
And touch as gentle as the morning light,
Restor'st us, daily, to the powers of sense
And reason's stedfast rule—thou, thou alone
Art everlasting, and the blessèd Spirits,
Which thou includest, as the sea her waves:
For adoration thou endur'st; endure
For consciousness the motions of thy will;
For apprehension those transcendent truths
Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws
(Submission constituting strength and power)
Even to thy Being's infinite majesty!
This universe shall pass away—a work
Glorious! because the shadow of thy might,
A step, or link, for intercourse with thee.
Ah! if the time must come, in which my feet
No more shall stray where meditation leads,
By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,
Loved haunts like these; the unimprisoned Mind
May yet have scope to range among her own,
Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.
If the dear faculty of sight should fail,
Still, it may be allowed me to remember
What visionary powers of eye and soul
In youth were mine; when, stationed on the top
Of some huge hill—expectant, I beheld
The sun rise up, from distant climes returned
Darkness to chase, and sleep; and bring the day
His bounteous gift! or saw him toward the deep
Sink, with a retinue of flaming clouds
Attended; then, my spirit was entranced
With joy exalted to beatitude;
The measure of my soul was filled with bliss,
And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with light,
With pomp, with glory, with magnificence!

Those fervent raptures are for ever flown;
And, since their date, my soul hath undergone
Change manifold, for better or for worse:
Yet cease I not to struggle, and aspire
Heavenward; and chide the part of me that flags,
Through sinful choice; or dread necessity
On human nature from above imposed.
'Tis, by comparison, an easy task[1]
Earth to despise; but, to converse with heaven—
This is not easy:—to relinquish all
We have, or hope, of happiness and joy,
And stand in freedom loosened from this world,
I deem not arduous; but must needs confess
That 'tis a thing impossible to frame
Conceptions equal to the soul's desires;
And the most difficult of tasks to *keep*
Heights which the soul is competent to gain.
—Man is of dust: ethereal hopes are his,
Which, when they should sustain themselves aloft,
Want due consistence; like a pillar of smoke,
That with majestic energy from earth
Rises; but, having reached the thinner air,
Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.
From this infirmity of mortal kind
Sorrow proceeds, which else were not; at least,
If grief be something hallowed and ordained,
If, in proportion, it be just and meet,
Yet, through this weakness of the general heart,
Is it enabled to maintain its hold
In that excess which conscience disapproves.
For who could sink and settle to that point
Of selfishness; so senseless who could be
As long and perseveringly to mourn
For any object of his love, removed
From this unstable world, if he could fix
A satisfying view upon that state
Of pure, imperishable, blessedness,
Which reason promises, and holy writ
Ensures to all believers?—Yet mistrust
Is of such incapacity, methinks,
No natural branch; despondency far less;
And, least of all, is absolute despair.
—And, if there be whose tender frames have drooped
Even to the dust; apparently, through weight
Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power

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[1] See Note.

An agonizing sorrow to transmute;
Deem not that proof is here of hope withheld
When wanted most; a confidence impaired
So pitiably, that, having ceased to see
With bodily eyes, they are borne down by love
Of what is lost, and perish through regret.
Oh! no, the innocent Sufferer often sees
Too clearly; feels too vividly; and longs
To realize the vision, with intense
And over-constant yearning;—there—there lies
The excess, by which the balance is destroyed.
Too, too contracted are these walls of flesh,
This vital warmth too cold, these visual orbs,
Though inconceivably endowed, too dim
For any passion of the soul that leads
To ecstasy; and, all the crooked paths
Of time and change disdaining, takes its course
Along the line of limitless desires.
I, speaking now from such disorder free,
Nor rapt, nor craving, but in settled peace,
I cannot doubt that they whom you deplore
Are glorified; or, if they sleep, shall wake
From sleep, and dwell with God in endless love.
Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In mercy, carried infinite degrees
Beyond the tenderness of human hearts:
Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power,
That finds no limits but her own pure will.

Here then we rest; not fearing for our creed
The worst that human reasoning can achieve,
To unsettle or perplex it: yet with pain
Acknowledging, and grievous self-reproach,
That, though immovably convinced, we want
Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith
As soldiers live by courage; as, by strength
Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.
Alas! the endowment of immortal power[1]
Is matched unequally with custom, time,
And domineering faculties of sense
In *all*; in most, with superadded foes,
Idle temptations; open vanities,
Ephemeral offspring of the unblushing world;
And, in the private regions of the mind,
Ill-governed passions, ranklings of despite,
Immoderate wishes, pining discontent,
Distress and care. What then remains?—To seek
Those helps for his occasions ever near
Who lacks not will to use them; vows, renewed
On the first motion of a holy thought;
Vigils of contemplation; praise; and prayer—
A stream, which, from the fountain of the heart
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows
Without access of unexpected strength.
But, above all, the victory is most sure
For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience—conscience reverenced and obeyed,
As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
And his most perfect image in the world.
—Endeavour thus to live; these rules regard;
These helps solicit; and a stedfast seat
Shall then be yours among the happy few
Who dwell on earth, yet breathe empyreal air
Sons of the morning. For your nobler part,
Ere disencumbered of her mortal chains,
Doubt shall be quelled and trouble chased away;
With only such degree of sadness left
As may support longings of pure desire;
And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly
In the sublime attractions of the grave."

While, in this strain, the venerable Sage
Poured forth his aspirations, and announced
His judgments, near that lonely house we paced
A plot of greensward, seemingly preserved
By nature's care from wreck of scattered stones,
And from encroachment of encircling heath:
Small space! but, for reiterated steps,
Smooth and commodious; as a stately deck
Which to and fro the mariner is used

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[1] See Note.

To tread for pastime, talking with his mates,
Or haply thinking of far-distant friends,
While the ship glides before a steady breeze.
Stillness prevailed around us: and the voice
That spake was capable to lift the soul
Toward regions yet more tranquil. But, methought,
That he, whose fixed despondency had given
Impulse and motive to that strong discourse,
Was less upraised in spirit than abashed;
Shrinking from admonition, like a man
Who feels that to exhort is to reproach.
Yet not to be diverted from his aim,
The Sage continued:—
"For that other loss,
The loss of confidence in social man,
By the unexpected transports of our age
Carried so high, that every thought, which looked
Beyond the temporal destiny of the Kind,
To many seemed superfluous—as, no cause
Could e'er for such exalted confidence
Exist; so, none is now for fixed despair:
The two extremes are equally disowned
By reason: if, with sharp recoil, from one
You have been driven far as its opposite,
Between them seek the point whereon to build
Sound expectations. So doth he advise
Who shared at first the illusion; but was soon
Cast from the pedestal of pride by shocks
Which Nature gently gave, in woods and fields;
Nor unreproved by Providence, thus speaking
To the inattentive children of the world:
'Vainglorious Generation! what new powers
'On you have been conferred? what gifts, withheld
'From your progenitors, have ye received,
'Fit recompense of new desert? what claim
'Are ye prepared to urge, that my decrees
'For you should undergo a sudden change;
'And the weak functions of one busy day,
'Reclaiming and extirpating, perform
'What all the slowly-moving years of time,
'With their united force, have left undone?
'By nature's gradual processes be taught;
'By story be confounded! Ye aspire
'Rashly, to fall once more; and that false fruit,
'Which, to your overweening spirits, yields
'Hope of a flight celestial, will produce
'Misery and shame. But Wisdom of her sons
'Shall not the less, though late, be justified.'

Such timely warning," said the Wanderer, "gave
That visionary voice; and, at this day,
When a Tartarean darkness overspreads
The groaning nations; when the impious rule,
By will or by established ordinance,
Their own dire agents, and constrain the good
To acts which they abhor; though I bewail
This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
Prevents me not from owning, that the law,
By which mankind now suffers, is most just.
For by superior energies; more strict
Affiance in each other; faith more firm
In their unhallowed principles; the bad
Have fairly earned a victory o'er the weak,
The vacillating, inconsistent good.
Therefore, not unconsoled, I wait—in hope
To see the moment, when the righteous cause
Shall gain defenders zealous and devout
As they who have opposed her; in which Virtue
Will, to her efforts, tolerate no bounds
That are not lofty as her rights; aspiring
By impulse of her own ethereal zeal.
That spirit only can redeem mankind;
And when that sacred spirit shall appear,
Then shall *our* triumph be complete as theirs.
Yet, should this confidence prove vain, the wise
Have still the keeping of their proper peace;
Are guardians of their own tranquillity.
They act, or they recede, observe, and feel;
'Knowing the heart of man is set to be[1]
The centre of this world, about the which
Those revolutions of disturbances
Still roll; where all the aspects of misery
Predominate; whose strong effects are such
As he must bear, being powerless to redress;
And that unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is Man!'[2]

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[1] See Note.
[2] Daniel.

Happy is he who lives to understand,
Not human nature only, but explores
All natures,—to the end that he may find
The law that governs each; and where begins
The union, the partition where, that makes
Kind and degree, among all visible Beings;
The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
Which they inherit,—cannot step beyond,—
And cannot fall beneath; that do assign
To every class its station and its office,
Through all the mighty commonwealth of things
Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.
Such converse, if directed by a meek,
Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love:
For knowledge is delight; and such delight
Breeds love: yet, suited as it rather is
To thought and to the climbing intellect,
It teaches less to love, than to adore;
If that be not indeed the highest love!"

"Yet," said I, tempted here to interpose,
"The dignity of life is not impaired
By aught that innocently satisfies
The humbler cravings of the heart; and he
Is a still happier man, who, for those heights
Of speculation not unfit, descends;
And such benign affections cultivates
Among the inferior kinds; not merely those
That he may call his own, and which depend,
As individual objects of regard,
Upon his care, from whom he also looks
For signs and tokens of a mutual bond;
But others, far beyond this narrow sphere,
Whom, for the very sake of love, he loves.
Nor is it a mean praise of rural life
And solitude, that they do favour most,
Most frequently call forth, and best sustain,
These pure sensations; that can penetrate
The obstreperous city; on the barren seas
Are not unfelt; and much might recommend,
How much they might inspirit and endear,
The loneliness of this sublime retreat!"

"Yes," said the Sage, resuming the discourse
Again directed to his downcast Friend,
"If, with the froward will and grovelling soul
Of man, offended, liberty is here,
And invitation every hour renewed,
To mark *their* placid state, who never heard
Of a command which they have power to break,
Or rule which they are tempted to transgress:
These, with a soothed or elevated heart,
May we behold; their knowledge register;
Observe their ways; and, free from envy, find
Complacence there:—but wherefore this to you?
I guess that, welcome to your lonely hearth,
The redbreast, ruffled up by winter's cold
Into a 'feathery bunch,' feeds at your hand:
A box, perchance, is from your casement hung
For the small wren to build in;—not in vain,
The barriers disregarding that surround
This deep abiding place, before your sight
Mounts on the breeze the butterfly; and soars,
Small creature as she is, from earth's bright flowers,
Into the dewy clouds. Ambition reigns
In the waste wilderness: the Soul ascends
Drawn towards her native firmament of heaven,
When the fresh eagle, in the month of May,
Upborne, at evening, on replenished wing,
This shaded valley leaves; and leaves the dark
Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing
A proud communication with the sun
Low sunk beneath the horizon!—List!—I heard,
From yon huge breast of rock, a voice sent forth
As if the visible mountain made the cry.
Again!"—The effect upon the soul was such
As he expressed: from out the mountain's heart
The solemn voice appeared to issue, startling
The blank air—for the region all around

Stood empty of all shape of life, and silent
Save for that single cry, the unanswered bleat
Of a poor lamb—left somewhere to itself,
The plaintive spirit of the solitude!
He paused, as if unwilling to proceed,
Through consciousness that silence in such place
Was best, the most affecting eloquence.
But soon his thoughts returned upon themselves,
And, in soft tone of speech, thus he resumed.

"Ah! if the heart, too confidently raised,
Perchance too lightly occupied, or lulled
Too easily, despise or overlook
The vassalage that binds her to the earth,
Her sad dependence upon time, and all
The trepidations of mortality,
What place so destitute and void—but there
The little flower her vanity shall check;
The trailing worm reprove her thoughtless pride?

These craggy regions, these chaotic wilds,
Does that benignity pervade, that warms
The mole contented with her darksome walk
In the cold ground; and to the emmet gives
Her foresight, and intelligence that makes
The tiny creatures strong by social league;
Supports the generations, multiplies
Their tribes, till we behold a spacious plain
Or grassy bottom, all, with little hills—
Their labour, covered, as a lake with waves;
Thousands of cities, in the desert place
Built up of life, and food, and means of life!
Nor wanting here, to entertain the thought,
Creatures that in communities exist,
Less, as might seem, for general guardianship
Or through dependence upon mutual aid,
Than by participation of delight
And a strict love of fellowship, combined.
What other spirit can it be that prompts
The gilded summer flies to mix and weave
Their sports together in the solar beam,
Or in the gloom of twilight hum their joy?
More obviously the self-same influence rules
The feathered kinds; the fieldfare's pensive flock,
The cawing rooks, and sea-mews from afar,
Hovering above these inland solitudes,
By the rough wind unscattered, at whose call
Up through the trenches of the long-drawn vales
Their voyage was begun: nor is its power
Unfelt among the sedentary fowl
That seek yon pool, and there prolong their stay
In silent congress; or together roused
Take flight; while with their clang the air resounds:
And, over all, in that ethereal vault,
Is the mute company of changeful clouds;
Bright apparition, suddenly put forth,
The rainbow smiling on the faded storm;
The mild assemblage of the starry heavens;
And the great sun, earth's universal lord!

How bountiful is Nature! he shall find
Who seeks not; and to him, who hath not asked,
Large measure shall be dealt. Three sabbath-days
Are scarcely told, since, on a service bent
Of mere humanity, you clomb those heights;
And what a marvellous and heavenly show
Was suddenly revealed!—the swains moved on,
And heeded not: you lingered, you perceived
And felt, deeply as living man could feel.
There is a luxury in self-dispraise;
And inward self-disparagement affords
To meditative spleen a grateful feast.
Trust me, pronouncing on your own desert,
You judge unthankfully: distempered nerves
Infect the thoughts: the languor of the frame
Depresses the soul's vigour. Quit your couch—
Cleave not so fondly to your moody cell;
Nor let the hallowed powers, that shed from heaven
Stillness and rest, with disapproving eye
Look down upon your taper, through a watch
Of midnight hours, unseasonably twinkling
In this deep Hollow, like a sullen star
Dimly reflected in a lonely pool.

Take courage, and withdraw yourself from ways
That run not parallel to nature's course.
Rise with the lark! your matins shall obtain
Grace, be their composition what it may,
If but with hers performed; climb once again,
Climb every day, those ramparts; meet the breeze
Upon their tops, adventurous as a bee
That from your garden thither soars, to feed
On new-blown heath; let yon commanding rock
Be your frequented watch-tower; roll the stone
In thunder down the mountains; with all your might
Chase the wild goat; and if the bold red deer
Fly to those harbours, driven by hound and horn
Loud echoing, add your speed to the pursuit;
So, wearied to your hut shall you return,
And sink at evening into sound repose."

The Solitary lifted toward the hills
A kindling eye:—accordant feelings rushed
Into my bosom, whence these words broke forth:
"Oh! what a joy it were, in vigorous health,
To have a body (this our vital frame
With shrinking sensibility endued,
And all the nice regards of flesh and blood)
And to the elements surrender it
As if it were a spirit!—How divine,
The liberty, for frail, for mortal, man
To roam at large among unpeopled glens
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps; regions consecrate
To oldest time! and, reckless of the storm
That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,
Be as a presence or a motion—one
Among the many there; and while the mists
Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument; and while the streams
(As at a first creation and in haste
To exercise their untried faculties)
Descending from the region of the clouds,
And starting from the hollows of the earth
More multitudinous every moment, rend
Their way before them—what a joy to roam
An equal among mightiest energies;
And haply sometimes with articulate voice,
Amid the deafening tumult, scarcely heard
By him that utters it, exclaim aloud,
'Rage on ye elements! let moon and stars
Their aspects lend, and mingle in their turn
With this commotion (ruinous though it be)
From day to night, from night to day, prolonged!'"

"Yes," said the Wanderer, taking from my lips
The strain of transport, "whosoe'er in youth
Has, through ambition of his soul, given way
To such desires, and grasped at such delight,
Shall feel congenial stirrings late and long,
In spite of all the weakness that life brings,
Its cares and sorrows; he, though taught to own
The tranquillizing power of time, shall wake,
Wake sometimes to a noble restlessness—
Loving the sports which once he gloried in.

Compatriot, Friend, remote are Garry's hills,
The streams far distant of your native glen;
Yet is their form and image here expressed
With brotherly resemblance. Turn your steps
Wherever fancy leads; by day, by night,
Are various engines working, not the same
As those with which your soul in youth was moved,
But by the great Artificer endowed
With no inferior power. You dwell alone;
You walk, you live, you speculate alone;
Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,
For you a stately gallery maintain
Of gay or tragic pictures. You have seen,
Have acted, suffered, travelled far, observed
With no incurious eye; and books are yours,
Within whose silent chambers treasure lies
Preserved from age to age; more precious far

Than that accumulated store of gold
And orient gems, which, for a day of need,
The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs.
These hoards of truth you can unlock at will:
And music waits upon your skilful touch,
Sounds which the wandering shepherd from these heights
Hears, and forgets his purpose;—furnished thus,
How can you droop, if willing to be upraised?

A piteous lot it were to flee from Man—
Yet not rejoice in Nature. He, whose hours
Are by domestic pleasures uncaressed
And unenlivened; who exists whole years
Apart from benefits received or done
'Mid the transactions of the bustling crowd;
Who neither hears, nor feels a wish to hear,
Of the world's interests—such a one hath need
Of a quick fancy, and an active heart,
That, for the day's consumption, books may yield
Food not unwholesome; earth and air correct
His morbid humour, with delight supplied
Or solace, varying as the seasons change.
—Truth has her pleasure-grounds, her haunts of ease
And easy contemplation; gay parterres,
And labyrinthine walks, her sunny glades
And shady groves in studied contrast—each,
For recreation, leading into each:
These may he range, if willing to partake
Their soft indulgences, and in due time
May issue thence, recruited for the tasks
And course of service Truth requires from those
Who tend her altars, wait upon her throne,
And guard her fortresses. Who thinks, and feels,
And recognises ever and anon
The breeze of nature stirring in his soul,
Why need such man go desperately astray,
And nurse 'the dreadful appetite of death?'
If tired with systems, each in its degree
Substantial, and all crumbling in their turn,
Let him build systems of his own, and smile
At the fond work, demolished with a touch;
If unreligious, let him be at once,
Among ten thousand innocents, enrolled
A pupil in the many-chambered school,
Where superstition weaves her airy dreams.

Life's autumn past, I stand on winter's verge;
And daily lose what I desire to keep:
Yet rather would I instantly decline
To the traditionary sympathies
Of a most rustic ignorance, and take
A fearful apprehension from the owl
Or death-watch: and as readily rejoice,
If two auspicious magpies crossed my way;—
To this would rather bend than see and hear
The repetitions wearisome of sense,
Where soul is dead, and feeling hath no place;
Where knowledge, ill begun in cold remark
On outward things, with formal inference ends;
Or, if the mind turn inward, she recoils
At once—or, not recoiling, is perplexed—
Lost in a gloom of uninspired research;
Meanwhile, the heart within the heart, the seat
Where peace and happy consciousness should dwell,
On its own axis restlessly revolving,
Seeks, yet can nowhere find, the light of truth.

Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walked; and when and wheresoe'er he moved,
Alone or mated, solitude was not.
He heard, borne on the wind, the articulate voice
Of God; and Angels to his sight appeared
Crowning the glorious hills of paradise;
Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and talked
With winged Messengers; who daily brought
To his small island in the ethereal deep
Tidings of joy and love.—From those pure heights
(Whether of actual vision, sensible
To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
Have condescendingly been shadowed forth
Communications spiritually maintained,
And intuitions moral and divine)

Fell Human-kind—to banishment condemned
That flowing years repealed not: and distress
And grief spread wide; but Man escaped the doom
Of destitution;—solitude was not.
—Jehovah—shapeless Power above all Powers,
Single and one, the omnipresent God,
By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
Or cloud of darkness, localised in heaven;
On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark;
Or, out of Sion, thundering from his throne
Between the Cherubim—on the chosen Race
Showered miracles, and ceased not to dispense
Judgments, that filled the land from age to age
With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear;
And with amazement smote;—thereby to assert
His scorned, or unacknowledged, sovereignty.
And when the One, ineffable of name,
Of nature indivisible, withdrew
From mortal adoration or regard,
Not then was Deity engulphed; nor Man,
The rational creature, left, to feel the weight
Of his own reason, without sense or thought
Of higher reason and a purer will,
To benefit and bless, through mightier power:—
Whether the Persian—zealous to reject
Altar and image, and the inclusive walls
And roofs of temples built by human hands—
To loftiest heights ascending, from their tops,
With myrtle-wreathed tiara on his brow,
Presented sacrifice to moon and stars,
And to the winds and mother elements,
And the whole circle of the heavens, for him
A sensitive existence, and a God,
With lifted hands invoked, and songs of praise:
Or, less reluctantly to bonds of sense
Yielding his soul, the Babylonian framed
For influence undefined a personal shape;
And, from the plain, with toil immense, upreared
Tower eight times planted on the top of tower,
That Belus, nightly to his splendid couch
Descending, there might rest; upon that height
Pure and serene, diffused—to overlook
Winding Euphrates, and the city vast
Of his devoted worshippers, far-stretched,
With grove and field and garden interspersed;
Their town, and foodful region for support
Against the pressure of beleaguering war.

Chaldean Shepherds, ranging trackless fields,
Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
Looked on the polar star, as on a guide
And guardian of their course, that never closed
His stedfast eye. The planetary Five
With a submissive reverence they beheld;
Watched, from the centre of their sleeping flocks,
Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to move
Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
Decrees and resolutions of the Gods;
And, by their aspects, signifying works
Of dim futurity, to Man revealed.
—The imaginative faculty was lord
Of observations natural; and, thus
Led on, those shepherds made report of stars
In set rotation passing to and fro,
Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
And its invisible counterpart, adorned
With answering constellations, under earth,
Removed from all approach of living sight
But present to the dead; who, so they deemed,
Like those celestial messengers beheld
All accidents, and judges were of all.

The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding shores,—
Under a cope of sky more variable,
Could find commodious place for every God,
Promptly received, as prodigally brought,

From the surrounding countries, at the choice
Of all adventurers. With unrivalled skill,
As nicest observation furnished hints
For studious fancy, his quick hand bestowed
On fluent operations a fixed shape;
Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
And yet—triumphant o'er this pompous show
Of art, this palpable array of sense,
On every side encountered; in despite
Of the gross fictions chanted in the streets
By wandering Rhapsodists; and in contempt
Of doubt and bold denial hourly urged
Amid the wrangling schools—a SPIRIT hung,
Beautiful region! o'er thy towns and farms,
Statues and temples, and memorial tombs;
And emanations were perceived; and acts
Of immortality, in Nature's course,
Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt
As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed
And armèd warrior; and in every grove
A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,
When piety more awful had relaxed.
—'Take, running river, take these locks of mine'—
Thus would the Votary say—'this severed hair,
'My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
'Thankful for my belovèd child's return.
'Thy banks, Cephisus, he again hath trod,
'Thy murmurs heard; and drunk the crystal lymph
'With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
'And, all day long, moisten these flowery fields!'
And doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was shed
Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired;
That hath been, is, and where it was and is
There shall endure,—existence unexposed
To the blind walk of mortal accident;
From diminution safe and weakening age;
While man grows old, and dwindles, and decays;
And countless generations of mankind
Depart; and leave no vestige where they trod.

We live by Admiration, Hope and Love;
And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend.
But what is error?"—"Answer he who can!"
The Sceptic somewhat haughtily exclaimed:
"Love, Hope, and Admiration,—are they not
Mad Fancy's favourite vassals? Does not life
Use them, full oft, as pioneers to ruin,—
Guides to destruction? Is it well to trust
Imagination's light when reason's fails,
The unguarded taper where the guarded faints?
—Stoop from those heights, and soberly declare
What error is; and, of our errors, which
Doth most debase the mind; the genuine seats
Of power, where are they? Who shall regulate,
With truth, the scale of intellectual rank?"

"Methinks," persuasively the Sage replied,
"That for this arduous office you possess
Some rare advantages. Your early days
A grateful recollection must supply
Of much exalted good by Heaven vouchsafed
To dignify the humblest state.—Your voice
Hath, in my hearing, often testified
That poor men's children, they, and they alone,
By their condition taught, can understand
The wisdom of the prayer that daily asks
For daily bread. A consciousness is yours
How feelingly religion may be learned
In smoky cabins, from a mother's tongue—
Heard where the dwelling vibrates to the din
Of the contiguous torrent, gathering strength
At every moment—and, with strength, increase
Of fury; or, while snow is at the door,
Assaulting and defending, and the wind,
A sightless labourer, whistles at his work—
Fearful; but resignation tempers fear,
And piety is sweet to infant minds.
—The Shepherd-lad, that in the sunshine carves,
On the green turf, a dial—to divide
The silent hours; and who to that report
Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt,
Throughout a long and lonely summer's day

His round of pastoral duties, is not left
With less intelligence for *moral* things
Of gravest import. Early he perceives,
Within himself, a measure and a rule,
Which to the sun of truth he can apply,
That shines for him, and shines for all mankind.
Experience daily fixing his regards
On nature's wants, he knows how few they are,
And where they lie, how answered and appeased.
This knowledge ample recompense affords
For manifold privations; he refers
His notions to this standard; on this rock
Rests his desires; and hence, in after life,
Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime content.
Imagination—not permitted here
To waste her powers, as in the worldling's mind,
On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,
And trivial ostentation—is left free
And puissant to range the solemn walks
Of time and nature, girded by a zone
That, while it binds, invigorates and supports.
Acknowledge, then, that whether by the side
Of his poor hut, or on the mountain top,
Or in the cultured field, a Man so bred
(Take from him what you will upon the score
Of ignorance or illusion) lives and breathes
For noble purposes of mind: his heart
Beats to the heroic song of ancient days;
His eye distinguishes, his soul creates.
And those illusions, which excite the scorn
Or move the pity of unthinking minds,
Are they not mainly outward ministers
Of inward conscience? with whose service charged
They came and go, appeared and disappear,
Diverting evil purposes, remorse
Awakening, chastening an intemperate grief,
Or pride of heart abating: and, whene'er
For less important ends those phantoms move,
Who would forbid them, if their presence serve—
On thinly-peopled mountains and wild heaths,
Filling a space, else vacant—to exalt
The forms of Nature, and enlarge her powers?

Once more to distant ages of the world
Let us revert, and place before our thoughts
The face which rural solitude might wear
To the unenlightened swains of pagan Greece.
—In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman, stretched
On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
With music lulled his indolent repose:
And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,
Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,
A beardless Youth, who touched a golden lute,
And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.
The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
Up towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart
Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
That timely light, to share his joyous sport:
And hence, a beaming Goddess with her Nymphs,
Across the lawn and through the darksome grove,
Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
By echo multiplied from rock or cave,
Swept in the storm of chase; as moon and stars
Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,
When winds are blowing strong. The traveller slaked
His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
The Naiad. Sunbeams, upon distant hills
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.
The Zephyrs fanning, as they passed, their wings,
Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they wooed
With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,

Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain side;
And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard,—
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamesome Deities; or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring God!"

The strain was aptly chosen; and I could mark
Its kindly influence, o'er the yielding brow
Of our Companion, gradually diffused;
While, listening, he had paced the noiseless turf,
Like one whose untired ear a murmuring stream
Detains; but tempted now to interpose,
He with a smile exclaimed:—
"'Tis well you speak
At a safe distance from our native land,
And from the mansions where our youth was taught.
The true descendants of those godly men
Who swept from Scotland, in a flame of zeal,
Shrine, altar, image, and the massy piles
That harboured them,—the souls retaining yet
The churlish features of that after-race
Who fled to woods, caverns, and jutting rocks,
In deadly scorn of superstitious rites,
Or what their scruples construed to be such—
How, think you, would they tolerate this scheme
Of fine propensities, that tends, if urged
Far as it might be urged, to sow afresh
The weeds of Romish phantasy, in vain
Uprooted; would re-consecrate our wells
To good Saint Fillan and to fair Saint Anne;
And from long banishment recall Saint Giles,
To watch again with tutelary love
O'er stately Edinborough throned on crags?
A blessed restoration, to behold
The patron, on the shoulders of his priests,
Once more parading through her crowded streets,
Now simply guarded by the sober powers
Of science, and philosophy, and sense!"

This answer followed.—"You have turned my thoughts
Upon our brave Progenitors, who rose
Against idolatry with warlike mind,
And shrunk from vain observances, to lurk
In woods, and dwell under impending rocks
Ill-sheltered, and oft wanting fire and food;
Why?—for this very reason that they felt,
And did acknowledge, wheresoe'er they moved,
A spiritual presence, oft-times misconceived,
But still a high dependence, a divine
Bounty and government, that filled their hearts
With joy, and gratitude, and fear, and love;
And from their fervent lips drew hymns of praise,
That through the desert rang. Though favoured less,
Far less, than these, yet such, in their degree,
Were those bewildered Pagans of old time.
Beyond their own poor natures and above
They looked; were humbly thankful for the good
Which the warm sun solicited, and earth
Bestowed; were gladsome,—and their moral sense
They fortified with reverence for the Gods;
And they had hopes that overstepped the Grave.

Now, shall our great Discoverers," he exclaimed,
Raising his voice triumphantly, "obtain
From sense and reason, less than these obtained,
Though far misled? Shall men for whom our age
Unbaffled powers of vision hath prepared,
To explore the world without and world within,
Be joyless as the blind? Ambitious spirits—
Whom earth, at this late season, hath produced
To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh
The planets in the hollow of their hand;
And they who rather dive than soar, whose pains
Have solved the elements, or analysed
The thinking principle—shall they in fact

Prove a degraded Race? and what avails
Renown, if their presumption make them such?
Oh! there is laughter at their work in heaven!
Inquire of ancient Wisdom; go, demand
Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
That we should pry far off yet be unraised;
That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
Viewing all objects unremittingly
In disconnection dead and spiritless;
And still dividing, and dividing still,
Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
With the perverse attempt, while littleness
May yet become more little; waging thus
An impious warfare with the very life
Of our own souls!
And if indeed there be
An all-pervading Spirit, upon whom
Our dark foundations rest, could he design
That this magnificent effect of power,
The earth we tread, the sky that we behold
By day, and all the pomp which night reveals;
That these—and that superior mystery
Our vital frame, so fearfully devised,
And the dread soul within it—should exist
Only to be examined, pondered, searched,
Probed, vexed, and criticised? Accuse me not
Of arrogance, unknown Wanderer as I am;
If, having walked with Nature threescore years,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their DIVINITY
Revolts, offended at the ways of men
Swayed by such motives, to such ends employed;
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence;
That one, poor, finite object, in the abyss
Of infinite Being, twinkling restlessly!

Nor higher place can be assigned to him
And his compeers—the laughing Sage of France.—
Crowned was he, if my memory do not err,
With laurel planted upon hoary hairs,
In sign of conquest by his wit achieved
And benefits his wisdom had conferred;
His stooping body tottered with wreaths of flowers
Opprest, far less becoming ornaments
Than Spring oft twines about a mouldering tree;
Yet so it pleased a fond, a vain, old Man,
And a most frivolous people. Him I mean
Who penned, to ridicule confiding faith,
This sorry Legend; which by chance we found
Piled in a nook, through malice, as might seem,
Among more innocent rubbish."—Speaking thus,
With a brief notice when, and how, and where,
We had espied the book, he drew it forth;
And courteously, as if the act removed,
At once, all traces from the good Man's heart
Of unbenign aversion or contempt,
Restored it to its owner. "Gentle Friend,"
Herewith he grasped the Solitary's hand,
"You have known lights and guides better than these.
Ah! let not aught amiss within dispose
A noble mind to practise on herself,
And tempt opinion to support the wrongs
Of passion: whatsoe'er be felt or feared,
From higher judgment-seats make no appeal
To lower: can you question that the soul
Inherits an allegiance, not by choice
To be cast off, upon an oath proposed
By each new upstart notion? In the ports
Of levity no refuge can be found,
No shelter, for a spirit in distress.
He, who by wilful disesteem of life
And proud insensibility to hope,
Affronts the eye of Solitude, shall learn
That her mild nature can be terrible;
That neither she nor Silence lack the power
To avenge their own insulted majesty.

O blest seclusion! when the mind admits
The law of duty; and can therefore move
Through each vicissitude of loss and gain,
Linked in entire complacence with her choice;

When youth's presumptuousness is mellowed down,
And manhood's vain anxiety dismissed;
When wisdom shows her seasonable fruit,
Upon the boughs of sheltering leisure hung
In sober plenty; when the spirit stoops
To drink with gratitude the crystal stream
Of unreproved enjoyment; and is pleased
To muse, and be saluted by the air
Of meek repentance, wafting wall-flower scents
From out the crumbling ruins of fallen pride
And chambers of transgression, now forlorn.
O, calm contented days, and peaceful nights!
Who, when such good can be obtained, would strive
To reconcile his manhood to a couch
Soft, as may seem, but, under that disguise,
Stuffed with the thorny substance of the past
For fixed annoyance; and full oft beset
With floating dreams, black and disconsolate,
The vapoury phantoms of futurity?

Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal that they become
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene. Like power abides
In man's celestial spirit; virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feeds
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the encumbrances of mortal life,
From error, disappointment—nay, from guilt;
And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
From palpable oppressions of despair."

The Solitary by these words was touched
With manifest emotion, and exclaimed;
"But how begin? and whence?—'The Mind is free—
Resolve,' the haughty Moralist would say,
'This single act is all that we demand.'
Alas! such wisdom bids a creature fly
Whose very sorrow is, that time hath shorn
His natural wings!—To friendship let him turn
For succour; but perhaps he sits alone
On stormy waters, tossed in a little boat
That holds but him, and can contain no more!
Religion tells of amity sublime
Which no condition can preclude; of One
Who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs:
But is that bounty absolute?—His gifts,
Are they not, still, in some degree, rewards
For acts of service? Can his love extend
To hearts that own not him? Will showers of grace,
When in the sky no promise may be seen,
Fall to refresh a parched and withered land?
Or shall the groaning Spirit cast her load
At the Redeemer's feet?"
In rueful tone,
With some impatience in his mien, he spake:
Back to my mind rushed all that had been urged
To calm the Sufferer when his story closed;
I looked for counsel as unbending now;
But a discriminating sympathy
Stooped to this apt reply:—
"As men from men
Do, in the constitution of their souls,
Differ, by mystery not to be explained;
And as we fall by various ways, and sink
One deeper than another, self-condemned,
Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame;
So manifold and various are the ways
Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point, attainable by all—
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.
For you, assuredly, a hopeful road
Lies open: we have heard from you a voice
At every moment softened in its course
By tenderness of heart; have seen your eye,
Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
Kindle before us.—Your discourse this day,
That, like the fabled Lethe, wished to flow
In creeping sadness, through oblivious shades

Of death and night, has caught at every turn
The colours of the sun. Access for you
Is yet preserved to principles of truth,
Which the imaginative Will upholds
In seats of wisdom, not to be approached
By the inferior Faculty that moulds,
With her minute and speculative pains,
Opinion, ever changing!
                                        I have seen
A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for from within were heard
Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.
Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
Adore, and worship, when you know it not;
Pious beyond the intention of your thought;
Devout above the meaning of your will.
—Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
The estate of man would be indeed forlorn
If false conclusions of the reasoning power
Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
Through which the ear converses with the heart.
Has not the soul, the being of your life,
Received a shock of awful consciousness,
In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
At night's approach bring down the unclouded sky,
To rest upon their circumambient walls;
A temple framing of dimensions vast,
And yet not too enormous for the sound
Of human anthems,—choral song, or burst
Sublime of instrumental harmony,
To glorify the Eternal! What if these
Did never break the stillness that prevails
Here,—if the solemn nightingale be mute,
And the soft woodlark here did never chant
Her vespers,—Nature fails not to provide
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;
The little rills, and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
With the loud streams: and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the concave of the dark blue dome,
Unseen, perchance above all power of sight—
An iron knell! with echoes from afar
Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
The wanderer accompanies her flight
Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
Diminishing by distance till it seemed
To expire; yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recovered!
                                        But descending
From these imaginative heights, that yield
Far-stretching views into eternity,
Acknowledge that to Nature's humbler power
Your cherished sullenness is forced to bend
Even here, where her amenities are sown
With sparing hand. Then trust yourself abroad
To range her blooming bowers, and spacious fields,
Where on the labours of the happy throng
She smiles, including in her wide embrace
City, and town, and tower,—and sea with ships
Sprinkled;—be our Companion while we track
Her rivers populous with gliding life;
While, free as air, o'er printless sands we march,
Or pierce the gloom of her majestic woods;
Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
In peace and meditative cheerfulness;
Where living things, and things inanimate,
Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye and ear,
And speak to social reason's inner sense,
With inarticulate language.
                                        For, the Man—
Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms

Of nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
Accordingly he by degrees perceives
His feelings of aversion softened down;
A holy tenderness pervade his frame.
His sanity of reason not impaired,
Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
And seeks for good; and finds the good he seeks:
Until abhorrence and contempt are things
He only knows by name; and, if he hear,
From other mouths, the language which they speak,
He is compassionate; and has no thought,
No feeling, which can overcome his love.

And further; by contemplating these Forms
In the relations which they bear to man,
He shall discern, how, through the various means
Which silently they yield, are multiplied
The spiritual presences of absent things.
Trust me, that for the instructed, time will come
When they shall meet no object but may teach
Some acceptable lesson to their minds
Of human suffering, or of human joy.
So shall they learn, while all things speak of man,
Their duties from all forms; and general laws,
And local accidents, shall tend alike
To rouse, to urge; and, with the will, confer
The ability to spread the blessings wide
Of true philanthropy. The light of love
Not failing, perseverance from their steps
Departing not, for them shall be confirmed
The glorious habit by which sense is made
Subservient still to moral purposes,
Auxiliar to divine. That change shall clothe
The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore
The burthen of existence. Science then
Shall be a precious visitant; and then,
And only then, be worthy of her name:
For then her heart shall kindle; her dull eye,
Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang
Chained to its object in brute slavery;
But taught with patient interest to watch
The processes of things, and serve the cause
Of order and distinctness, not for this
Shall it forget that its most noble use,
Its most illustrious province, must be found
In furnishing clear guidance, a support
Not treacherous, to the mind's *excursive* power.
—So build we up the Being that we are;
Thus deeply drinking-in the soul of things
We shall be wise perforce; and, while inspired
By choice, and conscious that the Will is free,
Shall move unswerving, even as if impelled
By strict necessity, along the path
Of order and of good. Whate'er we see,
Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine;
Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,
Earthly desires; and raise, to loftier heights
Of divine love, our intellectual soul."

Here closed the Sage that eloquent harangue,
Poured forth with fervour in continuous stream,
Such as, remote, 'mid savage wilderness,
An Indian Chief discharges from his breast
Into the hearing of assembled tribes,
In open circle seated round, and hushed
As the unbreathing air, when not a leaf
Stirs in the mighty woods.—So did he speak:
The words he uttered shall not pass away
Dispersed, like music that the wind takes up
By snatches, and lets fall, to be forgotten;
No—they sank into me, the bounteous gift
Of one whom time and nature had made wise,
Gracing his doctrine with authority
Which hostile spirits silently allow;
Of one accustomed to desires that feed
On fruitage gathered from the tree of life;

To hopes on knowledge and experience built;
Of one in whom persuasion and belief
Had ripened into faith, and faith become
A passionate intuition; whence the Soul,
Though bound to earth by ties of pity and love,
From all injurious servitude was free.

The Sun, before his place of rest were reached,
Had yet to travel far, but unto us,
To us who stood low in that hollow dell,
He had become invisible,—a pomp
Leaving behind of yellow radiance spread
Over the mountain sides, in contrast bold
With ample shadows, seemingly, no less
Than those resplendent lights, his rich bequest;
A dispensation of his evening power.
—Adown the path that from the glen had led
The funeral train, the Shepherd and his Mate
Were seen descending:—forth to greet them ran
Our little Page: the rustic pair approach;
And in the Matron's countenance may be read
Plain indication that the words, which told
How that neglected Pensioner was sent
Before his time into a quiet grave,
Had done to her humanity no wrong:
But we are kindly welcomed—promptly served
With ostentatious zeal.—Along the floor
Of the small Cottage in the lonely Dell
A grateful couch was spread for our repose;
Where, in the guise of mountaineers, we lay,
Stretched upon fragrant heath, and lulled by sound
Of far-off torrents charming the still night,
And, to tired limbs and over-busy thoughts,
Inviting sleep and soft forgetfulness.

BOOK FIFTH

THE PASTOR

ARGUMENT

Farewell to the Valley—Reflections—A large and populous Vale described—The Pastor's Dwelling, and some account of him—Church and Monuments—The Solitary musing, and where—Roused—In the Churchyard the Solitary communicates the thoughts which had recently passed through his mind—Lofty tone of the Wanderer's discourse of yesterday adverted to—Rite of Baptism, and the professions accompanying it, contrasted with the real state of human life—Apology for the Rite—Inconsistency of the best men—Acknowledgment that practice falls far below the injunctions of duty as existing in the mind—General complaint of a falling-off in the value of life after the time of youth—Outward appearances of content and happiness in degree illusive—Pastor approaches—Appeal made to him—His answer—Wanderer in sympathy with him—Suggestion that the least ambitious enquirers may be most free from error—The Pastor is desired to give some portraits of the living or dead from his own observation of life among these Mountains—And for what purpose—Pastor consents—Mountain cottage—Excellent qualities of its Inhabitants—Solitary expresses his pleasure; but denies the praise of virtue to worth of this kind—Feelings of the Priest before he enters upon his account of persons interred in the Churchyard—Graves of unbaptized Infants—Funeral and sepulchral observances, whence—Ecclesiastical Establishments, whence derived—Profession of belief in the doctrine of Immortality.

"FAREWELL, deep Valley, with thy one rude House,
And its small lot of life-supporting fields,
And guardian rocks!—Farewell, attractive seat!
To the still influx of the morning light
Open, and day's pure cheerfulness, but veiled
From human observation, as if yet
Primeval forests wrapped thee round with dark
Impenetrable shade; once more farewell,
Majestic circuit, beautiful abyss,
By Nature destined from the birth of things
For quietness profound!"
Upon the side
Of that brown ridge, sole outlet of the vale
Which foot of boldest stranger would attempt,
Lingering behind my comrades, thus I breathed
A parting tribute to a spot that seemed
Like the fixed centre of a troubled world.
Again I halted with reverted eyes;
The chain that would not slacken, was at length

Snapt,—and, pursuing leisurely my way,
How vain, thought I, is it by change of place
To seek that comfort which the mind denies;
Yet trial and temptation oft are shunned
Wisely; and by such tenure do we hold
Frail life's possessions, that even they whose fate
Yields no peculiar reason of complaint
Might, by the promise that is here, be won
To steal from active duties, and embrace
Obscurity, and undisturbed repose.
—Knowledge, methinks, in these disordered times,
Should be allowed a privilege to have
Her anchorites, like piety of old;
Men, who, from faction sacred, and unstained
By war, might, if so minded, turn aside
Uncensured, and subsist, a scattered few
Living to God and nature, and content
With that communion. Consecrated be
The spots where such abide! But happier still
The Man, whom, furthermore, a hope attends
That meditation and research may guide
His privacy to principles and powers
Discovered or invented; or set forth,
Through his acquaintance with the ways of truth,
In lucid order; so that, when his course
Is run, some faithful eulogist may say,
He sought not praise, and praise did overlook
His unobtrusive merit; but his life,
Sweet to himself, was exercised in good
That shall survive his name and memory.

Acknowledgments of gratitude sincere
Accompanied these musings; fervent thanks
For my own peaceful lot and happy choice;
A choice that from the passions of the world
Withdrew, and fixed me in a still retreat;
Sheltered, but not to social duties lost,
Secluded, but not buried; and with song
Cheering my days, and with industrious thought;
With the ever-welcome company of books;
With virtuous friendship's soul-sustaining aid,
And with the blessings of domestic love.

Thus occupied in mind I paced along,
Following the rugged road, by sledge or wheel
Worn in the moorland, till I overtook
My two Associates, in the morning sunshine
Halting together on a rocky knoll,
Whence the bare road descended rapidly
To the green meadows of another vale.

Here did our pensive Host put forth his hand
In sign of farewell. "Nay," the old Man said,
"The fragrant air its coolness still retains;
The herds and flocks are yet abroad to crop
The dewy grass; you cannot leave us now,
We must not part at this inviting hour."
He yielded, though reluctant; for his mind
Instinctively disposed him to retire
To his own covert; as a billow, heaved
Upon the beach, rolls back into the sea.
—So we descend: and winding round a rock
Attain a point that showed the valley—stretched
In length before us; and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower,
Whose battlements were screened by tufted trees.
And towards a crystal Mere, that lay beyond
Among steep hills and woods embosomed, flowed
A copious stream with boldly-winding course;
Here traceable, there hidden—there again
To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
On the stream's bank, and everywhere, appeared
Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots;
Some scattered o'er the level, others perched
On the hill sides, a cheerful quiet scene,
Now in its morning purity arrayed.

"As 'mid some happy valley of the Alps,"
Said I, "once happy, ere tyrannic power,
Wantonly breaking in upon the Swiss,
Destroyed their unoffending commonwealth,
A popular equality reigns here,
Save for yon stately House beneath whose roof
A rural lord might dwell."—"No feudal pomp,

Or power," replied the Wanderer, "to that House
Belongs, but there in his allotted Home
Abides, from year to year, a genuine Priest,
The shepherd of his flock; or, as a king
Is styled, when most affectionately praised,
The father of his people. Such is he;
And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice
Under his spiritual sway. He hath vouchsafed
To me some portion of a kind regard;
And something also of his inner mind
Hath he imparted—but I speak of him
As he is known to all.
The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose,
And learning's solid dignity; though born
Of knightly race, nor wanting powerful friends.
Hither, in prime of manhood, he withdrew
From academic bowers. He loved the spot—
Who does not love his native soil?—he prized
The ancient rural character, composed
Of simple manners, feelings unsuppressed
And undisguised, and strong and serious thought
A character reflected in himself,
With such embellishment as well beseems
His rank and sacred function. This deep vale
Winds far in reaches hidden from our sight,
And one a turreted manorial hall
Adorns, in which the good Man's ancestors
Have dwelt through ages, Patrons of this Cure.
To them, and to his own judicious pains,
The Vicar's dwelling, and the whole domain,
Owes that presiding aspect which might well
Attract your notice; statelier than could else
Have been bestowed, through course of common chance,
On an unwealthy mountain Benefice."

This said, oft pausing, we pursued our way;
Nor reached the village-churchyard till the sun
Travelling at steadier pace than ours, had risen
Above the summits of the highest hills,
And round our path darted oppressive beams.

As chanced, the portals of the sacred Pile
Stood open; and we entered. On my frame,
At such transition from the fervid air,
A grateful coolness fell, that seemed to strike
The heart, in concert with that temperate awe
And natural reverence which the place inspired.
Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy; for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters intricately crossed,
Like leafless underboughs, in some thick wood,
All withered by the depth of shade above.
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,
Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed;
Each also crowned with wingèd heads—a pair
Of rudely-painted Cherubim. The floor
Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,
Was occupied by oaken benches ranged
In seemly rows; the chancel only showed
Some vain distinctions, marks of earthly state
By immemorial privilege allowed;
Though with the Encincture's special sanctity
But ill according. An heraldic shield,
Varying its tincture with the changeful light,
Imbued the altar-window; fixed aloft
A faded hatchment hung, and one by time
Yet undiscoloured. A capacious pew
Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery lined;
And marble monuments were here displayed
Thronging the walls; and on the floor beneath
Sepulchral stones appeared, with emblems graven
And foot-worn epitaphs, and some with small
And shining effigies of brass inlaid.

The tribute by these various records claimed,
Duly we paid, each after each, and read

The ordinary chronicle of birth,
Office, alliance, and promotion—all
Ending in dust; of upright magistrates,
Grave doctors strenuous for the mother-church,
And uncorrupted senators, alike
To king and people true. A brazen plate,
Not easily deciphered, told of one
Whose course of earthly honour was begun
In quality of page among the train
Of the eighth Henry, when he crossed the seas
His royal state to show, and prove his strength
In tournament, upon the fields of France.
Another tablet registered the death,
And praised the gallant bearing, of a Knight
Tried in the sea-fights of the second Charles.
Near this brave Knight his Father lay entombed;
And, to the silent language giving voice,
I read,—how in his manhood's earlier day
He, 'mid the afflictions of intestine war
And rightful government subverted, found
One only solace—that he had espoused
A virtuous Lady tenderly beloved
For her benign perfections; and yet more
Endeared to him, for this, that, in her state
Of wedlock richly crowned with Heaven's regard,
She with a numerous issue filled his house,
Who throve, like plants, uninjured by the storm
That laid their country waste. No need to speak
Of less particular notices assigned
To Youth or Maiden gone before their time,
And Matrons and unwedded Sisters old;
Whose charity and goodness were rehearsed
In modest panegyric.
"These dim lines,
What would they tell?" said I,—but, from the task
Of puzzling out that faded narrative,
With whisper soft my venerable Friend
Called me; and, looking down the darksome aisle,
I saw the Tenant of the lonely vale
Standing apart; with curvèd arm reclined
On the baptismal font; his pallid face
Upturned, as if his mind were rapt, or lost
In some abstraction;—gracefully he stood,
The semblance bearing of a sculptured form
That leans upon a monumental urn
In peace, from morn to night, from year to year.

Him from that posture did the Sexton rouse;
Who entered, humming carelessly a tune,
Continuation haply of the notes
That had beguiled the work from which he came,
With spade and mattock o'er his shoulder hung;
To be deposited, for future need,
In their appointed place. The pale Recluse
Withdrew; and straight we followed,—to a spot
Where sun and shade were intermixed; for there
A broad oak, stretching forth its leafy arms
From an adjoining pasture, overhung
Small space of that green churchyard with a light
And pleasant awning. On the moss-grown wall
My ancient Friend and I together took
Our seats; and thus the Solitary spake,
Standing before us:—
"Did you note the mien
Of that self-solaced, easy-hearted churl,
Death's hireling, who scoops out his neighbour's grave,
Or wraps an old acquaintance up in clay,
All unconcerned as he would bind a sheaf,
Or plant a tree. And did you hear his voice?
I was abruptly summoned by the sound
From some affecting images and thoughts,
Which then were silent; but crave utterance now.

Much," he continued, with dejected look,
"Much, yesterday, was said in glowing phrase,
Of our sublime dependencies, and hopes
For future states of being; and the wings
Of speculation, joyfully outspread,
Hovered above our destiny on earth:
But stoop, and place the prospect of the soul
In sober contrast with reality,
And man's substantial life. If this mute earth
Of what it holds could speak, and every grave
Were as a volume, shut, yet capable
Of yielding its contents to eye and ear,

We should recoil, stricken with sorrow and shame,
To see disclosed, by such dread proof, how ill
That which is done accords with what is known
To reason, and by conscience is enjoined;
How idly, how perversely, life's whole course,
To this conclusion, deviates from the line,
Or of the end stops short, proposed to all
At her aspiring outset.
Mark the babe
Not long accustomed to this breathing world;
One that hath barely learned to shape a smile,
Though yet irrational of soul, to grasp
With tiny finger—to let fall a tear;
And, as the heavy cloud of sleep dissolves,
To stretch his limbs, bemocking, as might seem,
The outward functions of intelligent man;
A grave proficient in amusive feats
Of puppetry, that from the lap declare
His expectations, and announce his claims
To that inheritance which millions rue
That they were ever born to! In due time
A day of solemn ceremonial comes;
When they, who for this Minor hold in trust
Rights that transcend the loftiest heritage
Of mere humanity, present their Charge,
For this occasion daintily adorned,
At the baptismal font. And when the pure
And consecrating element hath cleansed
The original stain, the child is there received
Into the second ark, Christ's church, with trust
That he, from wrath redeemed, therein shall float
Over the billows of this troublesome world
To the fair land of everlasting life.
Corrupt affections, covetous desires,
Are all renounced; high as the thought of man
Can carry virtue, virtue is professed;
A dedication made, a promise given
For due provision to control and guide,
And unremitting progress to ensure
In holiness and truth."
"You cannot blame,"
Here interposing fervently I said,
"Rites which attest that Man by nature lies
Bedded for good and evil in a gulf
Fearfully low; nor will your judgment scorn
Those services, whereby attempt is made
To lift the creature toward that eminence
On which, now fallen, erewhile in majesty
He stood; or if not so, whose top serene
At least he feels 'tis given him to descry;
Not without aspirations, evermore
Returning, and injunctions from within
Doubt to cast off and weariness; in trust
That what the Soul perceives, if glory lost,
May be, through pains and persevering hope,
Recovered; or, if hitherto unknown,
Lies within reach, and one day shall be gained."

"I blame them not," he calmly answered—"no;
The outward ritual and established forms
With which communities of men invest
These inward feelings, and the aspiring vows
To which the lips give public utterance
Are both a natural process; and by me
Shall pass uncensured; though the issue prove,
Bringing from age to age its own reproach,
Incongruous, impotent, and blank.—But, oh!
If to be weak is to be wretched—miserable,
As the lost Angel by a human voice
Hath mournfully pronounced, then, in my mind,
Far better not to move at all than move
By impulse sent from such illusive power,—
That finds and cannot fasten down; that grasps
And is rejoiced, and loses while it grasps;
That tempts, emboldens—for a time sustains,
And then betrays; accuses and inflicts
Remorseless punishment; and so retreads
The inevitable circle: better far
Than this, to graze the herb in thoughtless peace,
By foresight or remembrance, undisturbed!

Philosophy! and thou more vaunted name
Religion! with thy statelier retinue,
Faith, Hope, and Charity—from the visible world
Choose for your emblems whatsoe'er ye find

Of safest guidance or of firmest trust—
The torch, the star, the anchor; nor except
The cross itself, at whose unconscious feet
The generations of mankind have knelt
Ruefully seized, and shedding bitter tears,
And through that conflict seeking rest—of you,
High-titled Powers, am I constrained to ask,
Here standing, with the unvoyageable sky
In faint reflection of infinitude
Stretched overhead, and at my pensive feet
A subterraneous magazine of bones,
In whose dark vaults my own shall soon be laid,
Where are your triumphs? your dominion where?
And in what age admitted and confirmed?
—Not for a happy land do I enquire,
Island or grove, that hides a blessed few
Who, with obedience willing and sincere,
To your serene authorities conform;
But whom, I ask, of individual Souls,
Have ye withdrawn from passion's crooked ways,
Inspired, and thoroughly fortified?—If the heart
Could be inspected to its inmost folds
By sight undazzled with the glare of praise,
Who shall be named—in the resplendent line
Of sages, martyrs, confessors—the man
Whom the best might of faith, wherever fixed,
For one day's little compass, has preserved
From painful and discreditable shocks
Of contradiction, from some vague desire
Culpably cherished, or corrupt relapse
To some unsanctioned fear?"
"If this be so,
And Man," said I, "be in his noblest shape
Thus pitiably infirm; then, he who made,
And who shall judge the creature, will forgive.
—Yet, in its general tenor, your complaint
Is all too true; and surely not misplaced:
For, from this pregnant spot of ground, such thoughts
Rise to the notice of a serious mind
By natural exhalation. With the dead
In their repose, the living in their mirth,
Who can reflect, unmoved, upon the round
Of smooth and solemnized complacencies,
By which, on Christian lands, from age to age
Profession mocks performance. Earth is sick,
And Heaven is weary, of the hollow words
Which States and Kingdoms utter when they talk
Of truth and justice. Turn to private life
And social neighbourhood; look we to ourselves;
A light of duty shines on every day
For all; and yet how few are warmed or cheered!
How few who mingle with their fellow-men
And still remain self-governed, and apart,
Like this our honoured Friend; and thence acquire
Right to expect his vigorous decline,
That promises to the end a blest old age!"

"Yet," with a smile of triumph thus exclaimed
The Solitary, "in the life of man,
If to the poetry of common speech
Faith may be given, we see as in a glass
A true reflection of the circling year,
With all its seasons. Grant that Spring is there,
In spite of many a rough untoward blast,
Hopeful and promising with buds and flowers;
Yet where is glowing Summer's long rich day,
That *ought* to follow faithfully expressed?
And mellow Autumn, charged with bounteous fruit,
Where is she imaged? in what favoured clime
Her lavish pomp, and ripe magnificence?
—Yet, while the better part is missed, the worse
In man's autumnal season is set forth
With a resemblance not to be denied,
And that contents him; bowers that hear no more
The voice of gladness, less and less supply
Of outward sunshine and internal warmth;
And, with this change, sharp air and falling leaves,
Foretelling aged Winter's desolate sway.

How gay the habitations that bedeck
This fertile valley! Not a house but seems
To give assurance of content within;

Embosomed happiness, and placid love;
As if the sunshine of the day were met
With answering brightness in the hearts of all
Who walk this favoured ground. But chance-regards,
And notice forced upon incurious ears;
These, if these only, acting in despite
Of the encomiums by my Friend pronounced
On humble life, forbid the judging mind
To trust the smiling aspect of this fair
And noiseless commonwealth. The simple race
Of mountaineers (by nature's self removed
From foul temptations, and by constant care
Of a good shepherd tended as themselves
Do tend their flocks) partake man's general lot
With little mitigation. They escape,
Perchance, the heavier woes of guilt; feel not
The tedium of fantastic idleness:
Yet life, as with the multitude, with them
Is fashioned like an ill-constructed tale;
That on the outset wastes its gay desires,
Its fair adventures, its enlivening hopes,
And pleasant interests — for the sequel leaving
Old things repeated with diminished grace;
And all the laboured novelties at best
Imperfect substitutes, whose use and power
Evince the want and weakness whence they spring."

While in this serious mood we held discourse,
The reverend Pastor toward the church-yard gate
Approached; and, with a mild respectful air
Of native cordiality, our Friend
Advanced to greet him. With a gracious mien
Was he received, and mutual joy prevailed.
Awhile they stood in conference, and I guess
That he, who now upon the mossy wall
Sate by my side, had vanished, if a wish
Could have transferred him to the flying clouds,
Or the least penetrable hiding-place
In his own valley's rocky guardianship.
—For me, I looked upon the pair, well pleased:
Nature had framed them both, and both were marked
By circumstance, with intermixture fine
Of contrast and resemblance. To an oak
Hardy and grand, a weather-beaten oak,
Fresh in the strength and majesty of age,
One might be likened: flourishing appeared,
Though somewhat past the fulness of his prime,
The other—like a stately sycamore,
That spreads, in gentle pomp, its honied shade.

A general greeting was exchanged; and soon
The Pastor learned that his approach had given
A welcome interruption to discourse
Grave, and in truth too often sad.—"Is Man
A child of hope? Do generations press
On generations, without progress made?
Halts the individual, ere his hairs be grey,
Perforce? Are we a creature in whom good
Preponderates, or evil? Doth the will
Acknowledge reason's law? A living power
Is virtue, or no better than a name,
Fleeting as health or beauty, and unsound?
So that the only substance which remains,
(For thus the tenor of complaint hath run)
Among so many shadows, are the pains
And penalties of miserable life,
Doomed to decay, and then expire in dust!
—Our cogitations, this way have been drawn,
These are the points," the Wanderer said, "on which
Our inquest turns.—Accord, good Sir! the light
Of your experience to dispel this gloom:
By your persuasive wisdom shall the heart
That frets, or languishes, be stilled and cheered."

"Our nature," said the Priest, in mild reply,
"Angels may weigh and fathom: they perceive,
With undistempered and unclouded spirit,
The object as it is; but, for ourselves,
That speculative height *we* may not reach.
The good and evil are our own; and we
Are that which we would contemplate from far.

Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
Is difficult to gain, and hard to keep—
As virtue's self; like virtue is beset
With snares; tried, tempted, subject to decay.
Love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate,
Blind were we without these: through these alone
Are capable to notice or discern
Or to record; we judge, but cannot be
Indifferent judges. 'Spite of proudest boast,
Reason, best reason, is to imperfect man
An effort only, and a noble aim;
A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
Still to be courted—never to be won.
—Look forth, or each man dive into himself;
What sees he but a creature too perturbed;
That is transported to excess; that yearns,
Regrets, or trembles, wrongly, or too much;
Hopes rashly, in disgust as rash recoils;
Battens on spleen, or moulders in despair?
Thus comprehension fails, and truth is missed;
Thus darkness and delusion round our path
Spread, from disease, whose subtle injury lurks
Within the very faculty of sight.

Yet for the general purposes of faith
In Providence, for solace and support,
We may not doubt that who can best subject
The will to reason's law, can strictliest live
And act in that obedience, he shall gain
The clearest apprehension of those truths,
Which unassisted reason's utmost power
Is too infirm to reach. But, waiving this,
And our regards confining within bounds
Of less exalted consciousness, through which
The very multitude are free to range,
We safely may affirm that human life
Is either fair and tempting, a soft scene
Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,
Or a forbidden tract of cheerless view;
Even as the same is looked at, or approached.
Thus, when in changeful April fields are white
With new-fallen snow, if from the sullen north
Your walk conduct you hither, ere the sun
Hath gained his noontide height, this churchyard, filled
With mounds transversely lying side by side
From east to west, before you will appear
An unillumined, blank, and dreary plain,
With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom
Saddening the heart. Go forward, and look back;
Look, from the quarter whence the lord of light,
Of life, of love, and gladness doth dispense
His beams; which, unexcluded in their fall,
Upon the southern side of every grave
Have gently exercised a melting power;
Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye,
All fresh and beautiful, and green and bright,
Hopeful and cheerful:—vanished is the pall
That overspread and chilled the sacred turf,
Vanished or hidden; and the whole domain,
To some, too lightly minded, might appear
A meadow carpet for the dancing hours.
—This contrast, not unsuitable to life,
Is to that other state more apposite,
Death and its two-fold aspect! wintry—one,
Cold, sullen, blank, from hope and joy shut out;
The other, which the ray divine hath touched,
Replete with vivid promise, bright as spring."

"We see, then, as we feel," the Wanderer thus
With a complacent animation spake,
"And in your judgment, Sir! the mind's repose
On evidence is not to be ensured
By act of naked reason. Moral truth
Is no mechanic structure, built by rule;
And which, once built, retains a stedfast shape
And undisturbed proportions; but a thing
Subject, you deem, to vital accidents;
And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,
Whose root is fixed in stable earth, whose head
Floats on the tossing waves. With joy sincere
I re-salute these sentiments confirmed
By your authority. But how acquire

The inward principle that gives effect
To outward argument; the passive will
Meek to admit; the active energy,
Strong and unbounded to embrace, and firm
To keep and cherish? how shall man unite
With self-forgetting tenderness of heart
An earth-despising dignity of soul?
Wise in that union, and without it blind!"

"The way," said I, "to court, if not obtain
The ingenuous mind, apt to be set aright;
This, in the lonely dell discoursing, you
Declared at large; and by what exercise
From visible nature, or the inner self
Power may be trained, and renovation brought
To those who need the gift. But, after all,
Is aught so certain as that man is doomed
To breathe beneath a vault of ignorance?
The natural roof of that dark house in which
His soul is pent! How little can be known—
This is the wise man's sigh; how far we err—
This is the good man's not unfrequent pang!
And they perhaps err least, the lowly class
Whom a benign necessity compels
To follow reason's least ambitious course;
Such do I mean who, unperplexed by doubt,
And unincited by a wish to look
Into high objects farther than they may,
Pace to and fro, from morn till eventide,
The narrow avenue of daily toil
For daily bread."
"Yes," buoyantly exclaimed
The pale Recluse—"praise to the sturdy plough,
And patient spade; praise to the simple crook,
And ponderous loom—resounding while it holds
Body and mind in one captivity;
And let the light mechanic tool be hailed
With honour; which, encasing by the power
Of long companionship, the artist's hand,
Cuts off that hand, with all its world of nerves,
From a too busy commerce with the heart!
—Inglorious implements of craft and toil,
Both ye that shape and build, and ye that force,
By slow solicitation, earth to yield
Her annual bounty, sparingly dealt forth
With wise reluctance; you would I extol,
Not for gross good alone which ye produce,
But for the impertinent and ceaseless strife
Of proofs and reasons ye preclude—in those
Who to your dull society are born,
And with their humble birthright rest content.
—Would I had ne'er renounced it!"
A slight flush
Of moral anger previously had tinged
The old Man's cheek; but, at this closing turn
Of self-reproach, it passed away. Said he,
"That which we feel we utter; as we think
So have we argued; reaping for our pains
No visible recompense. For our relief
You," to the Pastor turning thus he spake,
"Have kindly interposed. May I entreat
Your further help? The mine of real life
Dig for us; and present us, in the shape
Of virgin ore, that gold which we, by pains
Fruitless as those of aëry alchemists,
Seek from the torturing crucible. There lies
Around us a domain where you have long
Watched both the outward course and inner heart:
Give us, for our abstractions, solid facts;
For our disputes, plain pictures. Say what man
He is who cultivates yon hanging field;
What qualities of mind she bears, who comes,
For morn and evening service, with her pail,
To that green pasture; place before our sight
The family who dwell within yon house
Fenced round with glittering laurel; or in that
Below, from which the curling smoke ascends.
Or rather, as we stand on holy earth,[1]
And have the dead around us, take from them
Your instances; for they are both best known,
And by frail man most equitably judged.
Epitomise the life; pronounce, you can,
Authentic epitaphs on some of these

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[1] See Note.

Who, from their lowly mansions hither brought,
Beneath this turf lie mouldering at our feet:
So, by your records, may our doubts be solved;
And so, not searching higher we may learn
To prize the breath we share with human kind;
And look upon the dust of man with awe."

The Priest replied—"An office you impose
For which peculiar requisites are mine;
Yet much, I feel, is wanting—else the task
Would be most grateful. True indeed it is
That they whom death has hidden from our sight
Are worthiest of the mind's regard; with these
The future cannot contradict the past:
Mortality's last exercise and proof
Is undergone; the transit made that shows
The very Soul, revealed as she departs.
Yet, on your first suggestion, will I give,
Ere we descend into these silent vaults,
One picture from the living.
You behold,
High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
With stony barrenness, a shining speck
Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
Brush it away, or cloud pass over it;
And such it might be deemed—a sleeping sunbeam;
But 'tis a plot of cultivated ground,
Cut off, an island in the dusky waste;
And that attractive brightness is its own.
The lofty site, by nature framed to tempt
Amid a wilderness of rocks and stones
The tiller's hand, a hermit might have chosen,
For opportunity presented, thence
Far forth to send his wandering eye o'er land
And ocean, and look down upon the works,
The habitations, and the ways of men,
Himself unseen! But no tradition tells
That ever hermit dipped his maple dish
In the sweet spring that lurks 'mid yon green fields;
And no such visionary views belong
To those who occupy and till the ground,
High on that mountain where they long have dwelt
A wedded pair in childless solitude.
A house of stones collected on the spot,
By rude hands built, with rocky knolls in front,
Backed also by a ledge of rock, whose crest
Of birch-trees waves over the chimney top;
A rough abode—in colour, shape, and size,
Such as in unsafe times of border-war
Might have been wished for and contrived, to elude
The eye of roving plunderer—for their need
Suffices; and unshaken bears the assault
Of their most dreaded foe, the strong Southwest
In anger blowing from the distant sea.
—Alone within her solitary hut;
There, or within the compass of her fields,
At any moment may the Dame be found,
True as the stock-dove to her shallow nest
And to the grove that holds it. She beguiles
By intermingled work of house and field
The summer's day, and winter's; with success
Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,
Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content,
Until the expected hour at which her Mate
From the far-distant quarry's vault returns;
And by his converse crowns a silent day
With evening cheerfulness. In powers of mind,
In scale of culture, few among my flock
Hold lower rank than this sequestered pair:
But true humility descends from heaven;
And that best gift of heaven hath fallen on them;
Abundant recompense for every want.
—Stoop from your height, ye proud, and copy these!
Who, in their noiseless dwelling-place, can hear
The voice of wisdom whispering scripture texts
For the mind's government, or temper's peace;
And recommending for their mutual need,
Forgiveness, patience, hope, and charity!"

"Much was I pleased," the grey-haired Wanderer said,
"When to those shining fields our notice first

You turned; and yet more pleased have from your lips
Gathered this fair report of them who dwell
In that retirement; whither, by such course
Of evil hap and good as oft awaits
A tired way-faring man, once *I* was brought
While traversing alone yon mountain pass.
Dark on my road the autumnal evening fell,
And night succeeded with unusual gloom,
So hazardous that feet and hands became
Guides better than mine eyes—until a light
High in the gloom appeared, too high, methought,
For human habitation; but I longed
To reach it, destitute of other hope.
I looked with steadiness as sailors look
On the north star, or watch-tower's distant lamp,
And saw the light—now fixed—and shifting now—
Not like a dancing meteor, but in line
Of never-varying motion, to and fro.
It is no night-fire of the naked hills,
Thought I—some friendly covert must be near.
With this persuasion thitherward my steps
I turn, and reach at last the guiding light;
Joy to myself! but to the heart of her
Who there was standing on the open hill,
(The same kind Matron whom your tongue hath praised)
Alarm and disappointment! The alarm
Ceased, when she learned through what mishap I came,
And by what help had gained those distant fields.
Drawn from her cottage, on that aëry height,
Bearing a lantern in her hand she stood,
Or paced the ground—to guide her Husband home,
By that unwearied signal, kenned afar;
An anxious duty! which the lofty site,
Traversed but by a few irregular paths,
Imposes, whensoe'er untoward chance
Detains him after his accustomed hour
Till night lies black upon the ground. 'But come,
Come,' said the Matron, 'to our poor abode;
Those dark rocks hide it!' Entering, I beheld
A blazing fire—beside a cleanly hearth
Sate down; and to her office, with leave asked,
The Dame returned.
Or ere that glowing pile
Of mountain turf required the builder's hand
Its wasted splendour to repair, the door
Opened, and she re-entered with glad looks,
Her Helpmate following. Hospitable fare,
Frank conversation, made the evening's treat:
Need a bewildered traveller wish for more?
But more was given; I studied as we sate
By the bright fire, the good Man's form, and face
Not less than beautiful; an open brow
Of undisturbed humanity; a cheek
Suffused with something of a feminine hue;
Eyes beaming courtesy and mild regard;
But, in the quicker turns of the discourse,
Expression slowly varying, that evinced
A tardy apprehension. From a fount
Lost, thought I, in the obscurities of time,
But honoured once, those features and that mien
May have descended, though I see them here.
In such a man, so gentle and subdued,
Withal so graceful in his gentleness,
A race illustrious for heroic deeds,
Humbled, but not degraded, may expire.
This pleasing fancy (cherished and upheld
By sundry recollections of such fall
From high to low, ascent from low to high,
As books record, and even the careless mind
Cannot but notice among men and things)
Went with me to the place of my repose.

Roused by the crowing cock at dawn of day,
I yet had risen too late to interchange
A morning salutation with my Host,
Gone forth already to the far-off seat
Of his day's work. 'Three dark mid-winter months
'Pass,' said the Matron 'and I never see,
'Save when the sabbath brings its kind release,
'My Helpmate's face by light of day. He quits
'His door in darkness, nor till dusk returns.
'And, through Heaven's blessing, thus we gain the bread

'For which we pray; and for the wants provide
'Of sickness, accident, and helpless age.
'Companions have I many; many friends,
'Dependants, comforters—my wheel, my fire,
'All day the house-clock ticking in mine ear,
'The cackling hen, the tender chicken brood,
'And the wild birds that gather round my porch.
'This honest sheep-dog's countenance I read;
'With him can talk; nor blush to waste a word
'On creatures less intelligent and shrewd.
'And if the blustering wind that drives the clouds
'Care not for me, he lingers round my door,
'And makes me pastime when our tempers suit;—
'But, above all, my thoughts are my support,
'My comfort:—would that they were oftener fixed
'On what, for guidance in the way that leads
'To heaven, I know, by my Redeemer taught.'
The Matron ended—nor could I forbear
To exclaim—'O happy! yielding to the law
Of these privations, richer in the main!—
While thankless thousands are opprest and clogged
By ease and leisure; by the very wealth
And pride of opportunity made poor;
While tens of thousands falter in their path,
And sink, through utter want of cheering light;
For you the hours of labour do not flag;
For you each evening hath its shining star,
And every sabbath-day its golden sun.'"

"Yes!" said the Solitary with a smile
That seemed to break from an expanding heart,
"The untutored bird may found, and so construct,
And with such soft materials line, her nest
Fixed in the centre of a prickly brake,
That the thorns wound her not; they only guard.
Powers not unjustly likened to those gifts
Of happy instinct which the woodland bird
Shares with her species, nature's grace sometimes
Upon the individual doth confer,
Among her higher creatures born and trained
To use of reason. And, I own that, tired
Of the ostentatious world—a swelling stage
With empty actions and vain passions stuffed,
And from the private struggles of mankind
Hoping far less than I could wish to hope,
Far less than once I trusted and believed—
I love to hear of those, who, not contending
Nor summoned to contend for virtue's prize,
Miss not the humbler good at which they aim,
Blest with a kindly faculty to blunt
The edge of adverse circumstance, and turn
Into their contraries the petty plagues
And hindrances with which they stand beset.
In early youth, among my native hills,
I knew a Scottish Peasant who possessed
A few small crofts of stone-encumbered ground;
Masses of every shape and size, that lay
Scattered about under the mouldering walls
Of a rough precipice; and some, apart,
In quarters unobnoxious to such chance,
As if the moon had showered them down in spite.
But he repined not. Though the plough was scared
By these obstructions, 'round the shady stones
'A fertilising moisture,' said the Swain,
'Gathers, and is preserved; and feeding dews
'And damps, through all the droughty summer day
'From out their substance issuing, maintain
'Herbage that never fails; no grass springs up
'So green, so fresh, so plentiful, as mine!'
But thinly sown these natures; rare, at least,
The mutual aptitude of seed and soil
That yields such kindly product. He, whose bed
Perhaps yon loose sods cover, the poor Pensioner

Brought yesterday from our sequestered dell
Here to lie down in lasting quiet, he,
If living now, could otherwise report
Of rustic loneliness: that grey-haired Orphan—
So call him, for humanity to him
No parent was—feelingly could have told,
In life, in death, what solitude can breed
Of selfishness, and cruelty, and vice;
Or, if it breed not, hath not power to cure.
—But your compliance, Sir! with our request
My words too long have hindered."
Undeterred,
Perhaps incited rather, by these shocks,
In no ungracious opposition, given
To the confiding spirit of his own
Experienced faith, the reverend Pastor said,
Around him looking; "Where shall I begin?
Who shall be first selected from my flock
Gathered together in their peaceful fold?"
He paused—and having lifted up his eyes
To the pure heaven, he cast them down again
Upon the earth beneath his feet; and spake:—

"To a mysteriously-united pair
This place is consecrate; to Death and Life,
And to the best affections that proceed
From their conjunction; consecrate to faith
In him who bled for man upon the cross;
Hallowed to revelation; and no less
To reason's mandates: and the hopes divine
Of pure imagination;—above all,
To charity, and love, that have provided,
Within these precincts, a capacious bed
And receptacle, open to the good
And evil, to the just and the unjust;
In which they find an equal resting-place:
Even as the multitude of kindred brooks
And streams, whose murmur fills this hollow vale,
Whether their course be turbulent or smooth,
Their waters clear or sullied, all are lost
Within the bosom of yon crystal Lake,
And end their journey in the same repose!

And blest are they who sleep; and we that know,
While in a spot like this we breathe and walk,
That all beneath us by the wings are covered
Of motherly humanity, outspread
And gathering all within their tender shade,
Though loth and slow to come! A battle-field,
In stillness left when slaughter is no more,
With this compared, makes a strange spectacle!
A dismal prospect yields the wild shore strewn
With wrecks, and trod by feet of young and old
Wandering about in miserable search
Of friends or kindred, whom the angry sea
Restores not to their prayer! Ah! who would think
That all the scattered subjects which compose
Earth's melancholy vision through the space
Of all her climes—these wretched, these depraved,
To virtue lost, insensible of peace,
From the delights of charity cut off,
To pity dead, the oppressor and the opprest;
Tyrants who utter the destroying word,
And slaves who will consent to be destroyed—
Were of one species with the sheltered few,
Who, with a dutiful and tender hand,
Lodged, in a dear appropriated spot,
This file of infants; some that never breathed
The vital air; others, which, though allowed
That privilege, did yet expire too soon,
Or with too brief a warning, to admit
Administration of the holy rite
That lovingly consigns the babe to the arms
Of Jesus, and his everlasting care.
These that in trembling hope are laid apart;
And the besprinkled nursling, unrequired
Till he begins to smile upon the breast
That feeds him; and the tottering little-one
Taken from air and sunshine when the rose
Of infancy first blooms upon his cheek;
The thinking, thoughtless, school-boy; the bold youth
Of soul impetuous, and the bashful maid
Smitten while all the promises of life
Are opening round her; those of middle age,
Cast down while confident in strength they stand,
Like pillars fixed more firmly, as might seem,

And more secure, by very weight of all
That, for support, rests on them; the decayed
And burthensome; and lastly, that poor few
Whose light of reason is with age extinct;
The hopeful and the hopeless, first and last,
The earliest summoned and the longest spared—
Are here deposited, with tribute paid
Various, but unto each some tribute paid;
As if, amid these peaceful hills and groves,
Society were touched with kind concern,
And gentle 'Nature grieved, that one should die;'[1]
Or, if the change demanded no regret,
Observed the liberating stroke—and blessed.

And whence that tribute? wherefore these regards?[1]
Not from the naked *Heart* alone of Man
(Though claiming high distinction upon earth
As the sole spring and fountain-head of tears,
His own peculiar utterance for distress
Or gladness)—No," the philosophic Priest
Continued, "'tis not in the vital seat
Of feeling to produce them, without aid
From the pure soul, the soul sublime and pure;
With her two faculties of eye and ear,
The one by which a creature, whom his sins
Have rendered prone, can upward look to heaven;
The other that empowers him to perceive
The voice of Deity, on height and plain,
Whispering those truths in stillness, which the WORD,
To the four quarters of the winds, proclaims.
Not without such assistance could the use
Of these benign observances prevail:
Thus are they born, thus fostered, thus maintained;
And by the care prospective of our wise
Forefathers, who, to guard against the shocks
The fluctuation and decay of things,
Embodied and established these high truths
In solemn institutions:—men convinced
That life is love and immortality,
The being one, and one the element.
There lies the channel, and original bed,
From the beginning, hollowed out and scooped
For Man's affections—else betrayed and lost,
And swallowed up 'mid deserts infinite!
This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
Of prescient reason; all conclusions else
Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and perverse.
The faith partaking of those holy times,
Life, I repeat, is energy of love
Divine or human; exercised in pain,
In strife, and tribulation; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy."

BOOK SIXTH

THE CHURCHYARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

ARGUMENT

Poet's Address to the State and Church of England—The Pastor not inferior to the ancient Worthies of the Church—He begins his Narratives with an instance of unrequited Love—Anguish of mind subdued, and how—The lonely Miner—An instance of perseverance—Which leads by contrast to an example of abused talents, irresolution, and weakness—Solitary, applying this covertly to his own case, asks for an instance of some Stranger, whose dispositions may have led him to end his days here—Pastor, in answer, gives an account of the harmonising influence of Solitude upon two men of opposite principles, who had encountered agitations in public life—The rule by which Peace may be obtained expressed, and where—Solitary hints at an overpowering Fatality—Answer of the Pastor—What subjects he will exclude from his Narratives—Conversation upon this—Instance of an unamiable character, a Female, and why given—Contrasted with this, a meek sufferer, from unguarded and betrayed love—Instance of heavier guilt, and its consequences to the Offender—With this instance of a Marriage Contract broken is contrasted one of a Widower, evidencing his faithful affection towards his deceased wife by his care of their female Children.

HAIL to the crown by Freedom shaped—to gird
An English Sovereign's brow! and to the throne

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[1] See Note.

Whereon he sits! Whose deep foundations lie
In veneration and the people's love;
Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law.
—Hail to the State of England! And conjoin
With this a salutation as devout,
Made to the spiritual fabric of her Church;
Founded in truth; by blood of Martyrdom
Cemented; by the hands of Wisdom reared
In beauty of holiness, with ordered pomp,
Decent and unreproved. The voice, that greets
The majesty of both, shall pray for both;
That, mutually protected and sustained,
They may endure long as the sea surrounds
This favoured Land, or sunshine warms her soil.

And O, ye swelling hills, and spacious plains
Besprent from shore to shore with steeple-towers,
And spires whose 'silent finger points to heaven;'[1]
Nor wanting, at wide intervals, the bulk
Of ancient minster lifted above the cloud
Of the dense air, which town or city breeds
To intercept the sun's glad beams—may ne'er
That true succession fail of English hearts,
Who, with ancestral feeling, can perceive
What in those holy structures ye possess
Of ornamental interest, and the charm
Of pious sentiment diffused afar,
And human charity, and social love.
—Thus never shall the indignities of time
Approach their reverend graces, unopposed;
Nor shall the elements be free to hurt
Their fair proportions; nor the blinder rage
Of bigot zeal madly to overturn;
And, if the desolating hand of war
Spare them, they shall continue to bestow
Upon the thronged abodes of busy men
(Depraved, and ever prone to fill the mind
Exclusively with transitory things)
An air and mien of dignified pursuit;
Of sweet civility, on rustic wilds.

The Poet, fostering for his native land
Such hope, entreats that servants may abound
Of those pure altars worthy; ministers
Detached from pleasure, to the love of gain
Superior, insusceptible of pride,
And by ambitious longings undisturbed;
Men, whose delight is where their duty leads
Or fixes them; whose least distinguished day
Shines with some portion of that heavenly lustre
Which makes the sabbath lovely in the sight
Of blessed angels, pitying human cares.
—And, as on earth it is the doom of truth
To be perpetually attacked by foes
Open or covert, be that priesthood still,
For her defence, replenished with a band
Of strenuous champions, in scholastic arts
Thoroughly disciplined; nor (if in course
Of the revolving world's disturbances
Cause should recur, which righteous Heaven avert!
To meet such trial) from their spiritual sires
Degenerate; who, constrained to wield the sword
Of disputation, shrunk not, though assailed
With hostile din, and combating in sight
Of angry umpires, partial and unjust;
And did, thereafter, bathe their hands in fire,
So to declare the conscience satisfied:
Nor for their bodies would accept release;
But, blessing God and praising him, bequeathed
With their last breath, from out the smouldering flame,
The faith which they by diligence had earned,
Or, through illuminating grace, received,
For their dear countrymen, and all mankind.
O high example, constancy divine!

Even such a Man (inheriting the zeal
And from the sanctity of elder times
Not deviating,—a priest, the like of whom
If multiplied, and in their stations set,
Would o'er the bosom of a joyful land
Spread true religion and her genuine fruits)
Before me stood that day; on holy ground
Fraught with the relics of mortality,
Exalting tender themes, by just degrees
To lofty raised; and to the highest, last;

[1] See Note

The head and mighty paramount of truths,—
Immortal life, in never-fading worlds,
For mortal creatures, conquered and secured.

That basis laid, those principles of faith
Announced, as a preparatory act
Of reverence done to the spirit of the place,
The Pastor cast his eyes upon the ground;
Not, as before, like one oppressed with awe
But with a mild and social cheerfulness;
Then to the Solitary turned, and spake.

"At morn or eve, in your retired domain,
Perchance you not unfrequently have marked
A Visitor—in quest of herbs and flowers;
Too delicate employ, as would appear,
For one, who, though of drooping mien, had yet
From nature's kindliness received a frame
Robust as ever rural labour bred."

The Solitary answered: "Such a Form
Full well I recollect. We often crossed
Each other's path; but, as the Intruder seemed
Fondly to prize the silence which he kept,
And I as willingly did cherish mine,
We met, and passed, like shadows. I have heard,
From my good Host, that being crazed in brain
By unrequited love, he scaled the rocks,
Dived into caves, and pierced the matted woods,
In hope to find some virtuous herb of power
To cure his malady!"
The Vicar smiled,—
"Alas! before to-morrow's sun goes down
His habitation will be here: for him
That open grave is destined."
"Died he then
Of pain and grief?" the Solitary asked,
"Do not believe it; never could that be!"

"He loved," the Vicar answered, "deeply loved,
Loved fondly, truly, fervently; and dared
At length to tell his love, but sued in vain;
Rejected, yea repelled; and, if with scorn
Upon the haughty maiden's brow, 'tis but
A high-prized plume which female Beauty wears
In wantonness of conquest, or puts on
To cheat the world, or from herself to hide
Humiliation, when no longer free.
That he could brook, and glory in;—but when
The tidings came that she whom he had wooed
Was wedded to another, and his heart
Was forced to rend away its only hope;
Then, Pity could have scarcely found on earth
An object worthier of regard than he,
In the transition of that bitter hour!
Lost was she, lost; nor could the Sufferer say
That in the act of preference he had been
Unjustly dealt with; but the Maid was gone!
Had vanished from his prospects and desires;
Not by translation to the heavenly choir
Who have put off their mortal spoils—ah no!
She lives another's wishes to complete,—
'Joy be their lot, and happiness,' he cried,
'His lot and hers, as misery must be mine!'

Such was that strong concussion; but the Man,
Who trembled, trunk and limbs, like some huge oak
By a fierce tempest shaken, soon resumed
The stedfast quiet natural to a mind
Of composition gentle and sedate,
And, in its movements, circumspect and slow.
To books, and to the long-forsaken desk,
O'er which enchained by science he had loved
To bend, he stoutly re-addressed himself,
Resolved to quell his pain, and search for truth
With keener appetite (if that might be)
And closer industry. Of what ensued
Within the heart no outward sign appeared
Till a betraying sickliness was seen
To tinge his cheek; and through his frame it crept
With slow mutation unconcealable;
Such universal change as autumn makes
In the fair body of a leafy grove,

Discoloured, then divested.
'Tis affirmed
By poets skilled in nature's secret ways
That Love will not submit to be controlled
By mastery:—and the good Man lacked not friends
Who strove to instil this truth into his mind,
A mind in all heart-mysteries unversed.
'Go to the hills,' said one, 'remit a while
'This baneful diligence:—at early morn
'Court the fresh air, explore the heaths and woods;
'And, leaving it to others to foretell,
'By calculations sage, the ebb and flow
'Of tides, and when the moon will be eclipsed,
'Do you, for your own benefit, construct
'A calendar of flowers, plucked as they blow
'Where health abides, and cheerfulness, and peace.'
The attempt was made;—'tis needless to report
How hopelessly; but innocence is strong,
And an entire simplicity of mind
A thing most sacred in the eye of Heaven;
That opens, for such sufferers, relief
Within the soul, fountains of grace divine;
And doth commend their weakness and disease
To Nature's care, assisted in her office
By all the elements that round her wait
To generate, to preserve, and to restore;
And by her beautiful array of forms
Shedding sweet influence from above; or pure
Delight exhaling from the ground they tread."

"Impute it not to impatience, if," exclaimed
The Wanderer, "I infer that he was healed
By perseverance in the course prescribed."

"You do not err: the powers, that had been lost
By slow degrees, were gradually regained;
The fluttering nerves composed; the beating heart
In rest established; and the jarring thoughts
To harmony restored.—But yon dark mould
Will cover him, in the fulness of his strength,
Hastily smitten by a fever's force;
Yet not with stroke so sudden as refused
Time to look back with tenderness on her
Whom he had loved in passion; and to send
Some farewell words—with one, but one, request;
That, from his dying hand, she would accept
Of his possessions that which most he prized;
A book, upon whose leaves some chosen plants,
By his own hand disposed with nicest care,
In undecaying beauty were preserved;
Mute register, to him, of time and place,
And various fluctuations in the breast;
To her, a monument of faithful love
Conquered, and in tranquillity retained!

Close to his destined habitation, lies
One who achieved a humbler victory,
Though marvellous in its kind. A place there is
High in these mountains, that allured a band
Of keen adventurers to unite their pains
In search of precious ore: they tried, were foiled—
And all desisted, all, save him alone.
He, taking counsel of his own clear thoughts,
And trusting only to his own weak hands,
Urged unremittingly the stubborn work,
Unseconded, uncountenanced; then, as time
Passed on, while still his lonely efforts found
No recompense, derided; and at length,
By many pitied, as insane of mind;
By others dreaded as the luckless thrall
Of subterranean Spirits feeding hope
By various mockery of sight and sound;
Hope after hope, encouraged and destroyed.
—But when the lord of seasons had matured
The fruits of earth through space of twice ten years,
The mountain's entrails offered to his view
And trembling grasp the long-deferred reward.
Not with more transport did Columbus greet
A world, his rich discovery! But our Swain,
A very hero till his point was gained,
Proved all unable to support the weight
Of prosperous fortune. On the fields he looked
With an unsettled liberty of thought,
Wishes and endless schemes; by daylight walked

Giddy and restless; ever and anon
Quaffed in his gratitude immoderate cups;
And truly might be said to die of joy!
He vanished; but conspicuous to this day
The path remains that linked his cottage-door
To the mine's mouth; a long and slanting track,
Upon the rugged mountain's stony side,
Worn by his daily visits to and from
The darksome centre of a constant hope.
This vestige, neither force of beating rain,
Nor the vicissitudes of frost and thaw
Shall cause to fade, till ages pass away;
And it is named, in memory of the event,
The PATH OF PERSEVERANCE."
"Thou from whom
Man has his strength," exclaimed the Wanderer, "oh!
Do thou direct it! To the virtuous grant
The penetrative eye which can perceive
In this blind world the guiding vein of hope;
That, like this Labourer, such may dig their way,
'Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified;'
Grant to the wise *his* firmness of resolve!"

"That prayer were not superfluous," said the Priest,
"Amid the noblest relics, proudest dust,
That Westminster, for Britain's glory, holds
Within the bosom of her awful pile,
Ambitiously collected. Yet the sigh,
Which wafts that prayer to heaven, is due to all,
Wherever laid, who living fell below
Their virtue's humbler mark; a sigh of *pain*
If to the opposite extreme they sank.
How would you pity her who yonder rests;
Him, farther off; the pair, who here are laid;
But, above all, that mixture of earth's mould
Whom sight of this green hillock to my mind
Recalls!
He lived not till his locks were nipped
By seasonable frost of age; nor died
Before his temples, prematurely forced
To mix the manly brown with silver grey,
Gave obvious instance of the sad effect
Produced, when thoughtless Folly hath usurped
The natural crown that sage Experience wears.
Gay, volatile, ingenious, quick to learn,
And prompt to exhibit all that he possessed
Or could perform; a zealous actor, hired
Into the troop of mirth, a soldier, sworn
Into the lists of giddy enterprise—
Such was he; yet, as if within his frame
Two several souls alternately had lodged,
Two sets of manners could the Youth put on;
And, fraught with antics as the Indian bird
That writhes and chatters in her wiry cage,
Was graceful, when it pleased him, smooth and still
As the mute swan that floats adown the stream,
Or, on the waters of the unruffled lake,
Anchors her placid beauty. Not a leaf,
That flutters on the bough, lighter than he;
And not a flower, that droops in the green shade,
More winningly reserved! If ye enquire
How such consummate elegance was bred
Amid these wilds, this answer may suffice;
'Twas Nature's will; who sometimes undertakes,
For the reproof of human vanity,
Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.
Hence, for this Favourite—lavishly endowed
With personal gifts, and bright instinctive wit,
While both, embellishing each other, stood
Yet farther recommended by the charm
Of fine demeanour, and by dance and song,
And skill in letters—every fancy shaped
Fair expectations; nor, when to the world's
Capacious field forth went the Adventurer, there
Were he and his attainments overlooked,
Or scantily rewarded; but all hopes,
Cherished for him, he suffered to depart,
Like blighted buds; or clouds that mimicked land
Before the sailor's eye; or diamond drops
That sparkling decked the morning grass; or aught
That *was* attractive, and hath ceased to be!

Yet, when this Prodigal returned, the rites
Of joyful greeting were on him bestowed,
Who, by humiliation undeterred,
Sought for his weariness a place of rest
Within his Father's gates.—Whence came he?—clothed
In tattered garb, from hovels where abides

Necessity, the stationary host
Of vagrant poverty; from rifted barns
Where no one dwells but the wide-staring owl
And the owl's prey; from these bare haunts, to which
He had descended from the proud saloon,
He came, the ghost of beauty and of health,
The wreck of gaiety! But soon revived
In strength, in power refitted, he renewed
His suit to Fortune; and she smiled again
Upon a fickle Ingrate. Thrice he rose,
Thrice sank as willingly. For he—whose nerves
Were used to thrill with pleasure, while his voice
Softly accompanied the tuneful harp,
By the nice finger of fair ladies touched
In glittering halls—was able to derive
No less enjoyment from an abject choice.
Who happier for the moment—who more blithe
Than this fallen Spirit? in those dreary holds
His talents lending to exalt the freaks
Of merry-making beggars,—nor provoked
To laughter multiplied in louder peals
By his malicious wit; then, all enchained
With mute astonishment, themselves to see
In their own arts outdone, their fame eclipsed,
As by the very presence of the Fiend
Who dictates and inspires illusive feats,
For knavish purposes! The city, too,
(With shame I speak it) to her guilty bowers
Allured him, sunk so low in self-respect
As there to linger, there to eat his bread,
Hired minstrel of voluptuous blandishment;
Charming the air with skill of hand or voice,
Listen who would, be wrought upon who might,
Sincerely wretched hearts, or falsely gay.
—Such the too frequent tenor of his boast
In ears that relished the report;—but all
Was from his Parents happily concealed;
Who saw enough for blame and pitying love.
They also were permitted to receive
His last, repentant breath; and closed his eyes,
No more to open on that irksome world
Where he had long existed in the state
Of a young fowl beneath one mother hatched,
Though from another sprung, different in kind:
Where he had lived, and could not cease to live,
Distracted in propensity; content
With neither element of good or ill;
And yet in both rejoicing; man unblest;
Of contradictions infinite the slave,
Till his deliverance, when Mercy made him
One with himself, and one with them that sleep."

"'Tis strange," observed the Solitary, "strange
It seems, and scarcely less than pitiful,
That in a land where charity provides
For all that can no longer feed themselves,
A man like this should choose to bring his shame
To the parental door; and with his sighs
Infect the air which he had freely breathed
In happy infancy. He could not pine,
Through lack of converse; no—he must have found
Abundant exercise for thought and speech,
In his dividual being, self-reviewed,
Self-catechised, self-punished.—Some there are
Who, drawing near their final home, and much
And daily longing that the same were reached,
Would rather shun than seek the fellowship
Of kindred mould.—Such haply here are laid?"

"Yes," said the Priest, "the Genius of our hills—
Who seems, by these stupendous barriers cast
Round his domain, desirous not alone
To keep his own, but also to exclude
All other progeny—doth sometimes lure,
Even by his studied depth of privacy,
The unhappy alien hoping to obtain
Concealment, or seduced by wish to find,
In place from outward molestation free,
Helps to internal ease. Of many such
Could I discourse; but as their stay was brief,
So their departure only left behind
Fancies, and loose conjectures. Other trace
Survives, for worthy mention, of a pair

Who, from the pressure of their several fates,
Meeting as strangers, in a petty town
Whose blue roofs ornament a distant reach
Of this far-winding vale, remained as friends
True to their choice; and gave their bones in trust
To this loved cemetery, here to lodge
With unescutcheoned privacy interred
Far from the family vault.—A Chieftain one
By right of birth; within whose spotless breast
The fire of ancient Caledonia burned:
He, with the foremost whose impatience hailed
The Stuart, landing to resume, by force
Of arms, the crown which bigotry had lost,
Aroused his clan; and, fighting at their head,
With his brave sword endeavoured to prevent
Culloden's fatal overthrow. Escaped
From that disastrous rout, to foreign shores
He fled; and when the lenient hand of time
Those troubles had appeased, he sought and gained,
For his obscured condition, an obscure
Retreat, within this nook of English ground.

The other, born in Britain's southern tract,
Had fixed his milder loyalty, and placed
His gentler sentiments of love and hate,
There, where *they* placed them who in conscience prized
The new succession, as a line of kings
Whose oath had virtue to protect the land
Against the dire assaults of papacy
And arbitrary rule. But launch thy bark
On the distempered flood of public life,
And cause for most rare triumph will be thine
If, spite of keenest eye and steadiest hand,
The stream, that bears thee forward, prove not, soon
Or late, a perilous master. He—who oft,
Beneath the battlements and stately trees
That round his mansion cast a sober gloom,
Had moralised on this, and other truths
Of kindred import, pleased and satisfied—
Was forced to vent his wisdom with a sigh
Heaved from the heart in fortune's bitterness,
When he had crushed a plentiful estate
By ruinous contest, to obtain a seat
In Britain's senate. Fruitless was the attempt:
And while the uproar of that desperate strife
Continued yet to vibrate on his ear,
The vanquished Whig, under a borrowed name,
(For the mere sound and echo of his own
Haunted him with sensations of disgust
That he was glad to lose) slunk from the world
To the deep shade of those untravelled Wilds;
In which the Scottish Laird had long possessed
An undisturbed abode. Here, then, they met,
Two doughty champions; flaming Jacobite
And sullen Hanoverian! You might think
That losses and vexations, less severe
Than those which they had severally sustained,
Would have inclined each to abate his zeal
For his ungrateful cause; no,—I have heard
My reverend Father tell that, 'mid the calm
Of that small town encountering thus, they filled,
Daily, its bowling-green with harmless strife;
Plagued with uncharitable thoughts the church;
And vexed the market-place. But in the breasts
Of these opponents gradually was wrought,
With little change of general sentiment,
Such leaning towards each other, that their days
By choice were spent in constant fellowship;
And if, at times, they fretted with the yoke,
Those very bickerings made them love it more.

A favourite boundary to their lengthened walks
This Churchyard was. And, whether they had come
Treading their path in sympathy and linked
In social converse, or by some short space
Discreetly parted to preserve the peace,
One spirit seldom failed to extend its sway
Over both minds, when they awhile had marked

The visible quiet of this holy ground,
And breathed its soothing air:—the spirit of hope
And saintly magnanimity; that—spurning
The field of selfish difference and dispute,
And every care which transitory things,
Earth and the kingdoms of the earth, create—
Doth, by a rapture of forgetfulness,
Preclude forgiveness, from the praise debarred,
Which else the Christian virtue might have claimed.

There live who yet remember here to have seen
Their courtly figures, seated on the stump
Of an old yew, their favourite resting-place.
But as the remnant of the long-lived tree
Was disappearing by a swift decay,
They, with joint care, determined to erect,
Upon its site, a dial, that might stand
For public use preserved, and thus survive
As their own private monument: for this
Was the particular spot, in which they wished
(And Heaven was pleased to accomplish the desire)
That, undivided, their remains should lie.
So, where the mouldered tree had stood, was raised
Yon structure, framing, with the ascent of steps
That to the decorated pillar lead,
A work of art more sumptuous than might seem
To suit this place; yet built in no proud scorn
Of rustic homeliness; they only aimed
To ensure for it respectful guardianship.
Around the margin of the plate, whereon
The shadow falls to note the stealthy hours,
Winds an inscriptive legend."—At these words
Thither we turned; and gathered, as we read,
The appropriate sense, in Latin numbers couched:
'*Time flies; it is his melancholy task,*
To bring, and bear away, delusive hopes,
And re-produce the troubles he destroys.
But, while his blindness thus is occupied,
Discerning Mortal! do thou serve the will
Of Time's eternal Master, and that peace,
Which the world wants, shall be for thee confirmed!'

"Smooth verse, inspired by no unlettered Muse,"
Exclaimed the Sceptic, "and the strain of thought
Accords with nature's language;—the soft voice
Of yon white torrent falling down the rocks
Speaks, less distinctly, to the same effect.
If, then, their blended influence be not lost
Upon our hearts, not wholly lost, I grant,
Even upon mine, the more are we required
To feel for those among our fellow-men,
Who, offering no obeisance to the world,
Are yet made desperate by 'too quick a sense
Of constant infelicity,' cut off
From peace like exiles on some barren rock,
Their life's appointed prison; not more free
Than sentinels, between two armies, set,
With nothing better, in the chill night air,
Than their own thoughts to comfort them. Say why
That ancient story of Prometheus chained
To the bare rock, on frozen Caucasus;
The vulture, the inexhaustible repast
Drawn from his vitals? Say what meant the woes
By Tantalus entailed upon his race,
And the dark sorrows of the line of Thebes?
Fictions in form, but in their substance truths,
Tremendous truths! familiar to the men
Of long-past times, nor obsolete in ours.
Exchange the shepherd's frock of native grey
For robes with regal purple tinged; convert
The crook into a sceptre; give the pomp
Of circumstance; and here the tragic Muse
Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills,
The generations are prepared; the pangs,
The internal pangs, are ready; the dread strife
Of poor humanity's afflicted will
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

"Though," said the Priest in answer, "these be terms
Which a divine philosophy rejects,
We, whose established and unfailing trust
Is in controlling Providence, admit

That, through all stations, human life abounds
With mysteries;—for, if Faith were left untried,
How could the might, that lurks within her, then
Be shown? her glorious excellence—that ranks
Among the first of Powers and Virtues—proved?
Our system is not fashioned to preclude
That sympathy which you for others ask;
And I could tell, not travelling for my theme
Beyond these humble graves, of grievous crimes
And strange disasters; but I pass them by,
Loth to disturb what Heaven hath hushed in peace.
—Still less, far less, am I inclined to treat
Of Man degraded in his Maker's sight
By the deformities of brutish vice:
For, in such portraits, though a vulgar face
And a coarse outside of repulsive life
And unaffecting manners might at once
Be recognised by all"—"Ah! do not think,"
The Wanderer somewhat eagerly exclaimed,
"Wish could be ours that you, for such poor gain,
(Gain shall I call it?—gain of what?—for whom?)
Should breathe a word tending to violate
Your own pure spirit. Not a step we look for
In slight of that forbearance and reserve
Which common human-heartedness inspires,
And mortal ignorance and frailty claim,
Upon this sacred ground, if nowhere else."

"True," said the Solitary, "be it far
From us to infringe the laws of charity.
Let judgment here in mercy be pronounced;
This, self-respecting Nature prompts, and this
Wisdom enjoins; but if the thing we seek
Be genuine knowledge, bear we then in mind
How, from his lofty throne, the sun can fling
Colours as bright on exhalations bred
By weedy pool or pestilential swamp,
As by the rivulet sparkling where it runs,
Or the pellucid lake."

"Small risk," said I,
"Of such illusion do we here incur;
Temptation here is none to exceed the truth;
No evidence appears that they who rest
Within this ground, were covetous of praise,
Or of remembrance even, deserved or not.
Green is the Churchyard, beautiful and green,
Ridge rising gently by the side of ridge,
A heaving surface, almost wholly free
From interruption of sepulchral stones,
And mantled o'er with aboriginal turf
And everlasting flowers. These Dalesmen trust
The lingering gleam of their departed lives
To oral record, and the silent heart;
Depositories faithful and more kind
Than fondest epitaph: for, if those fail,
What boots the sculptured tomb? And who can blame,
Who rather would not envy, men that feel
This mutual confidence; if, from such source,
The practice flow,—if thence, or from a deep
And general humility in death?
Nor should I much condemn it, if it spring
From disregard of time's destructive power,
As only capable to prey on things
Of earth, and human nature's mortal part.

Yet—in less simple districts, where we see
Stone lift its forehead emulous of stone
In courting notice; and the ground all paved
With commendations of departed worth;
Reading, where'er we turn, of innocent lives,
Of each domestic charity fulfilled,
And sufferings meekly borne—I, for my part,
Though with the silence pleased that here prevails,
Among those fair recitals also range,
Soothed by the natural spirit which they breathe.
And, in the centre of a world whose soil
Is rank with all unkindness, compassed round
With such memorials, I have sometimes felt,

It was no momentary happiness
To have *one* Enclosure where the voice that speaks
In envy or detraction is not heard;
Which malice may not enter; where the traces
Of evil inclinations are unknown;
Where love and pity tenderly unite
With resignation; and no jarring tone
Intrudes, the peaceful concert to disturb
Of amity and gratitude."
"Thus sanctioned,"
The Pastor said, "I willingly confine
My narratives to subjects that excite
Feelings with these accordant; love, esteem,
And admiration; lifting up a veil,
A sunbeam introducing among hearts
Retired and covert; so that ye shall have
Clear images before your gladdened eyes
Of nature's unambitious underwood,
And flowers that prosper in the shade. And when
I speak of such among my flock as swerved
Or fell, those only shall be singled out
Upon whose lapse, or error, something more
Than brotherly forgiveness may attend;
To such will we restrict our notice, else
Better my tongue were mute.
And yet there are,
I feel, good reasons why we should not leave
Wholly untraced a more forbidding way.
For, strength to persevere and to support,
And energy to conquer and repel—
These elements of virtue, that declare
The native grandeur of the human soul—
Are oft-times not unprofitably shown
In the perverseness of a selfish course:
Truth every day exemplified, no less
In the grey cottage by the murmuring stream
Than in fantastic conqueror's roving camp,
Or 'mid the factious senate, unappalled
Whoe'er may sink, or rise—to sink again,
As merciless proscription ebbs and flows.

There," said the Vicar, pointing as he spake,
"A woman rests in peace; surpassed by few
In power of mind, and eloquent discourse.
Tall was her stature; her complexion dark
And saturnine; her head not raised to hold
Converse with heaven, nor yet deprest towards earth,
But in projection carried, as she walked
For ever musing. Sunken were her eyes;
Wrinkled and furrowed with habitual thought
Was her broad forehead; like the brow of one
Whose visual nerve shrinks from a painful glare
Of overpowering light.—While yet a child,
She, 'mid the humble flowerets of the vale,
Towered like the imperial thistle, not unfurnished
With its appropriate grace, yet rather seeking
To be admired, than coveted and loved.
Even at that age she ruled, a sovereign queen,
Over her comrades; else their simple sports,
Wanting all relish for her strenuous mind,
Had crossed her only to be shunned with scorn.
—Oh! pang of sorrowful regret for those
Whom, in their youth, sweet study has enthralled,
That they have lived for harsher servitude,
Whether in soul, in body, or estate!
Such doom was hers; yet nothing could subdue
Her keen desire of knowledge, nor efface
Those brighter images by books imprest
Upon her memory, faithfully as stars
That occupy their places, and, though oft
Hidden by clouds, and oft bedimmed by haze,
Are not to be extinguished, nor impaired.

Two passions, both degenerate, for they both
Began in honour, gradually obtained
Rule over her, and vexed her daily life;
An unremitting, avaricious thrift;
And a strange thraldom of maternal love,
That held her spirit, in its own despite,
Bound—by vexation, and regret, and scorn,
Constrained forgiveness, and relenting vows,
And tears, in pride suppressed, in shame concealed—
To a poor dissolute Son, her only child.
—Her wedded days had opened with mishap,
Whence dire dependence. What could she perform

To shake the burthen off? Ah! there was felt,
Indignantly, the weakness of her sex.
She mused, resolved, adhered to her resolve;
The hand grew slack in alms-giving, the heart
Closed by degrees to charity; heaven's blessing
Not seeking from that source, she placed her trust
In ceaseless pains—and strictest parsimony
Which sternly hoarded all that could be spared,
From each day's need, out of each day's least gain.

Thus all was re-established, and a pile
Constructed, that sufficed for every end,
Save the contentment of the builder's mind;
A mind by nature indisposed to aught
So placid, so inactive, as content;
A mind intolerant of lasting peace,
And cherishing the pang her heart deplored.
Dread life of conflict! which I oft compared
To the agitation of a brook that runs
Down a rocky mountain, buried now and lost
In silent pools, now in strong eddies chained;
But never to be charmed to gentleness:
Its best attainment fits of such repose
As timid eyes might shrink from fathoming.

A sudden illness seized her in the strength
Of life's autumnal season.—Shall I tell
How on her bed of death the Matron lay,
To Providence submissive, so she thought;
But fretted, vexed, and wrought upon, almost
To anger, by the malady that griped
Her prostrate frame with unrelaxing power,
As the fierce eagle fastens on the lamb?
She prayed, she moaned;—her husband's sister watched
Her dreary pillow, waited on her needs;
And yet the very sound of that kind foot
Was anguish to her ears! 'And must she rule,'
This was the death-doomed Woman heard to say
In bitterness, 'and must she rule and reign,
'Sole Mistress of this house, when I am gone?
'Tend what I tended, calling it her own!'
Enough;—I fear, too much.—One vernal evening,
While she was yet in prime of health and strength,
I well remember, while I passed her door
Alone, with loitering step, and upward eye
Turned towards the planet Jupiter that hung
Above the centre of the Vale, a voice
Roused me, her voice; it said, 'That glorious star
'In its untroubled element will shine
'As now it shines, when we are laid in earth
'And safe from all our sorrows.' With a sigh
She spake, yet, I believe, not unsustained
By faith in glory that shall far transcend
Aught by these perishable heavens disclosed
To sight or mind. Nor less than care divine
Is divine mercy. She, who had rebelled,
Was into meekness softened and subdued;
Did, after trials not in vain prolonged,
With resignation sink into the grave;
And her uncharitable acts, I trust,
And harsh unkindnesses are all forgiven,
Tho', in this Vale, remembered with deep awe."

THE Vicar paused; and toward a seat advanced,
A long stone-seat, fixed in the Churchyard wall;
Part shaded by cool sycamore, and part
Offering a sunny resting-place to them
Who seek the House of worship, while the bells
Yet ring with all their voices, or before
The last hath ceased its solitary knoll.
Beneath the shade we all sate down; and there,
His office, uninvited, he resumed.

"As on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March,
Screened by its parent, so that little mound
Lies guarded by its neighbour; the small heap
Speaks for itself; an Infant there doth rest;
The sheltering hillock is the Mother's grave.

If mild discourse, and manners that conferred
A natural dignity on humblest rank;
If gladsome spirits, and benignant looks,
That for a face not beautiful did more
Than beauty for the fairest face can do;
And if religious tenderness of heart,
Grieving for sin, and penitential tears
Shed when the clouds had gathered and distained
The spotless ether of a maiden life;
If these may make a hallowed spot of earth
More holy in the sight of God or Man;
Then, o'er that mould, a sanctity shall brood
Till the stars sicken at the day of doom.

Ah! what a warning for a thoughtless man,
Could field or grove, could any spot of earth,
Show to his eye an image of the pangs
Which it hath witnessed; render back an echo
Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod!
There, by her innocent Baby's precious grave,
And on the very turf that roofs her own,
The Mother oft was seen to stand, or kneel
In the broad day, a weeping Magdalene.
Now she is not; the swelling turf reports
Of the fresh shower, but of poor Ellen's tears
Is silent; nor is any vestige left
Of the path worn by mournful tread of her
Who, at her heart's light bidding, once had moved
In virgin fearlessness, with step that seemed
Caught from the pressure of elastic turf
Upon the mountains gemmed with morning dew,
In the prime hour of sweetest scents and airs.
—Serious and thoughtful was her mind; and yet,
By reconcilement exquisite and rare,
The form, port, motions, of this Cottage-girl
Were such as might have quickened and inspired
A Titian's hand, addrest to picture forth
Oread or Dryad glancing through the shade
What time the hunter's earliest horn is heard
Startling the golden hills. A wide-spread elm
Stands in our valley, named THE JOYFUL TREE;
From dateless usage which our peasants hold
Of giving welcome to the first of May
By dances round its trunk.—And if the sky
Permit, like honours, dance and song, are paid
To the Twelfth Night, beneath the frosty stars
Or the clear moon. The queen of these gay sports,
If not in beauty yet in sprightly air,
Was hapless Ellen.—No one touched the ground
So deftly, and the nicest maiden's locks
Less gracefully were braided;—but this praise,
Methinks, would better suit another place.

She loved, and fondly deemed herself beloved.
—The road is dim, the current unperceived,
The weakness painful and most pitiful,
By which a virtuous woman, in pure youth,
May be delivered to distress and shame.
Such fate was hers.—The last time Ellen danced,
Among her equals, round THE JOYFUL TREE,
She bore a secret burthen; and full soon
Was left to tremble for a breaking vow,—
Then, to bewail a sternly-broken vow,
Alone, within her widowed Mother's house.
It was the season of unfolding leaves,
Of days advancing toward their utmost length,
And small birds singing happily to mates
Happy as they. With spirit-saddening power
Winds pipe through fading woods; but those blithe notes
Strike the deserted to the heart; I speak
Of what I know, and what we feel within.
—Beside the cottage in which Ellen dwelt
Stands a tall ash-tree; to whose topmost twig
A thrush resorts, and annually chants,
At morn and evening from that naked perch,
While all the undergrove is thick with leaves,
A time-beguiling ditty, for delight

Of his fond partner, silent in the nest.
—'Ah why,' said Ellen, sighing to herself,
'Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge;
'And nature that is kind in woman's breast,
'And reason that in man is wise and good,
'And fear of him who is a righteous judge;
'Why do not these prevail for human life,
'To keep two hearts together, that began
'Their spring-time with one love, and that have need
'Of mutual pity and forgiveness, sweet
'To grant, or be received; while that poor bird—
'O come and hear him! Thou who hast to me
'Been faithless, hear him, though a lowly creature,
'One of God's simple children that yet know not
'The universal Parent, how he sings
'As if he wished the firmament of heaven
'Should listen, and give back to him the voice
'Of his triumphant constancy and love;
'The proclamation that he makes, how far
'His darkness doth transcend our fickle light!'

Such was the tender passage, not by me
Repeated without loss of simple phrase,
Which I perused, even as the words had been
Committed by forsaken Ellen's hand
To the blank margin of a Valentine,
Bedropped with tears. 'Twill please you to be told
That, studiously withdrawing from the eye
Of all companionship, the Sufferer yet
In lonely reading found a meek resource:
How thankful for the warmth of summer days,
When she could slip into the cottage-barn,
And find a secret oratory there;
Or, in the garden, under friendly veil
Of their long twilight, pore upon her book
By the last lingering help of the open sky
Until dark night dismissed her to her bed!
Thus did a waking fancy sometimes lose
The unconquerable pang of despised love.

A kindlier passion opened on her soul
When that poor Child was born. Upon its face
She gazed as on a pure and spotless gift
Of unexpected promise, where a grief
Or dread was all that had been thought of,—joy
Far livelier than bewildered traveller feels,
Amid a perilous waste that all night long
Hath harassed him toiling through fearful storm,
When he beholds the first pale speck serene
Of day-spring, in the gloomy east, revealed,
And greets it with thanksgiving. 'Till this hour,'
Thus, in her Mother's hearing Ellen spake,
'There was a stony region in my heart;
'But He, at whose command the parchèd rock
'Was smitten, and poured forth a quenching stream,
'Hath softened that obduracy, and made
'Unlooked-for gladness in the desert place,
'To save the perishing; and, henceforth, I breathe
'The air with cheerful spirit, for thy sake
'My infant! and for that good Mother dear,
'Who bore me; and hath prayed for me in vain;—
'Yet not in vain; it shall not be in vain.'
She spake, nor was the assurance unfulfilled;
And if heart-rending thoughts would oft return,
They stayed not long.—The blameless Infant grew
The Child whom Ellen and her Mother loved
They soon were proud of; tended it and nursed;
A soothing comforter, although forlorn;
Like a poor singing-bird from distant lands;
Or a choice shrub, which he, who passes by
With vacant mind, not seldom may observe
Fair-flowering in a thinly-peopled house,
Whose window, somewhat sadly, it adorns.

Through four months' space the Infant drew its food
From the maternal breast; then scruples rose;
Thoughts, which the rich are free from, came and crossed

The fond affection. She no more could bear
By her offence to lay a twofold weight
On a kind parent willing to forget
Their slender means: so, to that parent's care
Trusting her child, she left their common home,
And undertook with dutiful content
A Foster-mother's office.
'Tis, perchance,
Unknown to you that in these simple vales
The natural feeling of equality
Is by domestic service unimpaired;
Yet, though such service be, with us, removed
From sense of degradation, not the less
The ungentle mind can easily find means
To impose severe restraints and laws unjust,
Which hapless Ellen now was doomed to feel:
For (blinded by an over-anxious dread
Of such excitement and divided thought
As with her office would but ill accord)
The pair, whose infant she was bound to nurse,
Forbade her all communion with her own:
Week after week, the mandate they enforced.
—So near! yet not allowed, upon that sight
To fix her eyes—alas! 'twas hard to bear!
But worse affliction must be borne—far worse;
For 'tis Heaven's will—that, after a disease
Begun and ended within three days' space,
Her child should die; as Ellen now exclaimed,
Her own—deserted child!—Once, only once,
She saw it in that mortal malady;
And, on the burial-day, could scarcely gain
Permission to attend its obsequies.
She reached the house, last of the funeral train;
And some one, as she entered, having chanced
To urge unthinkingly their prompt departure,
'Nay,' said she, with commanding look, a spirit
Of anger never seen in her before,
'Nay, ye must wait my time!' and down she sate,
And by the unclosed coffin kept her seat
Weeping and looking, looking on and weeping,
Upon the last sweet slumber of her Child,
Until at length her soul was satisfied.

You see the Infant's Grave; and to this spot,
The Mother, oft as she was sent abroad,
On whatsoever errand, urged her steps:
Hither she came; here stood, and sometimes knelt
In the broad day, a rueful Magdalene!
So call her; for not only she bewailed
A mother's loss, but mourned in bitterness
Her own transgression; penitent sincere
As ever raised to heaven a streaming eye?
—At length the parents of the foster-child,
Noting that in despite of their commands
She still renewed and could not but renew
Those visitations, ceased to send her forth;
Or, to the garden's narrow bounds, confined.
I failed not to remind them that they erred;
For holy Nature might not thus be crossed,
Thus wronged in woman's breast: in vain I pleaded—
But the green stalk of Ellen's life was snapped,
And the flower drooped; as every eye could see,
It hung its head in mortal languishment.
—Aided by this appearance, I at length
Prevailed; and, from those bonds released, she went
Home to her mother's house.
The Youth was fled;
The rash betrayer could not face the shame
Or sorrow which his senseless guilt had caused;
And little would his presence, or proof given
Of a relenting soul, have now availed;
For, like a shadow, he was passed away
From Ellen's thoughts; had perished to her mind
For all concerns of fear, or hope, or love,
Save only those which to their common shame,
And to his moral being appertained:
Hope from that quarter would, I know, have brought
A heavenly comfort; there she recognised
An unrelaxing bond, a mutual need;
There, and, as seemed, there only.

She had built,
Her fond maternal heart had built, a nest
In blindness all too near the river's edge;
That work a summer flood with hasty swell
Had swept away; and now her Spirit longed
For its last flight to heaven's security.
—The bodily frame wasted from day to day;
Meanwhile, relinquishing all other cares,
Her mind she strictly tutored to find peace
And pleasure in endurance. Much she thought,
And much she read; and brooded feelingly
Upon her own unworthiness. To me,
As to a spiritual comforter and friend,
Her heart she opened; and no pains were spared
To mitigate, as gently as I could,
The sting of self-reproach, with healing words.
Meek Saint! through patience glorified on earth!
In whom, as by her lonely hearth she sate,
The ghastly face of cold decay put on
A sun-like beauty, and appeared divine!
May I not mention—that, within those walls,
In due observance of her pious wish,
The congregation joined with me in prayer
For her soul's good? Nor was that office vain.
—Much did she suffer: but, if any friend,
Beholding her condition, at the sight
Gave way to words of pity or complaint,
She stilled them with a prompt reproof, and said,
'He who afflicts me knows what I can bear;
'And, when I fail, and can endure no more,
'Will mercifully take me to himself.'
So, through the cloud of death, her Spirit passed
Into that pure and unknown world of love
Where injury cannot come:—and here is laid
The mortal Body by her Infant's side."

The Vicar ceased; and downcast looks made known
That each had listened with his inmost heart.
For me, the emotion scarcely was less strong
Or less benign than that which I had felt
When seated near my venerable Friend,
Under those shady elms, from him I heard
The story that retraced the slow decline
Of Margaret, sinking on the lonely heath
With the neglected house to which she clung.
—I noted that the Solitary's cheek
Confessed the power of nature.—Pleased though sad,
More pleased than sad, the grey-haired Wanderer sate;
Thanks to his pure imaginative soul
Capacious and serene; his blameless life,
His knowledge, wisdom, love of truth, and love
Of human kind! He was it who first broke
The pensive silence, saying:—
"Blest are they
Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong
Than to do wrong, albeit themselves have erred.
This tale gives proof that Heaven most gently deals
With such, in their affliction.—Ellen's fate,
Her tender spirit, and her contrite heart,
Call to my mind dark hints which I have heard
Of one who died within this vale, by doom
Heavier, as his offence was heavier far.
Where, Sir, I pray you, where are laid the bones
Of Wilfrid Armathwaite?"
The Vicar answered,
"In that green nook, close by the Churchyard wall,
Beneath yon hawthorn, planted by myself
In memory and for warning, and in sign
Of sweetness where dire anguish had been known,
Of reconcilement after deep offence—
There doth he rest. No theme his fate supplies
For the smooth glozings of the indulgent world;
Nor need the windings of his devious course
Be here retraced;—enough that, by mishap
And venial error, robbed of competence,
And her obsequious shadow, peace of mind,
He craved a substitute in troubled joy;
Against his conscience rose in arms, and, braving
Divine displeasure, broke the marriage-vow.
That which he had been weak enough to do
Was misery in remembrance; he was stung,
Stung by his inward thoughts, and by the smiles

Of wife and children stung to agony.
Wretched at home, he gained no peace abroad;
Ranged through the mountains, slept upon the earth,
Asked comfort of the open air, and found
No quiet in the darkness of the night,
No pleasure in the beauty of the day.
His flock he slighted: his paternal fields
Became a clog to him, whose spirit wished
To fly—but whither! And this gracious Church,
That wears a look so full of peace and hope
And love, benignant mother of the vale,
How fair amid her brood of cottages!
She was to him a sickness and reproach.
Much to the last remained unknown: but this
Is sure, that through remorse and grief he died;
Though pitied among men, absolved by God,
He could not find forgiveness in himself;
Nor could endure the weight of his own shame.

Here rests a Mother. But from her I turn
And from her grave.—Behold—upon that ridge,
That, stretching boldly from the mountain side,
Carries into the centre of the vale
Its rocks and woods—the Cottage where she dwelt
And where yet dwells her faithful Partner, left
(Full eight years past) the solitary prop
Of many helpless Children. I begin
With words that might be prelude to a tale
Of sorrow and dejection; but I feel
No sadness, when I think of what mine eyes
See daily in that happy family.
—Bright garland form they for the pensive brow
Of their undrooping Father's widowhood,
Those six fair Daughters, budding yet—not one,
Not one of all the band, a full-blown flower.
Deprest, and desolate of soul, as once
That Father was, and filled with anxious fear,
Now, by experience taught, he stands assured,
That God, who takes away, yet takes not half
Of what he seems to take; or gives it back,
Not to our prayer, but far beyond our prayer;
He gives it—the boon produce of a soil
Which our endeavours have refused to till,
And hope hath never watered. The Abode,
Whose grateful owner can attest these truths,
Even were the object nearer to our sight,
Would seem in no distinction to surpass
The rudest habitations. Ye might think
That it had sprung self-raised from earth, or grown
Out of the living rock, to be adorned
By nature only; but, if thither led,
Ye would discover, then, a studious work
Of many fancies, prompting many hands.

Brought from the woods the honeysuckle twines
Around the porch, and seems, in that trim place,
A plant no longer wild; the cultured rose
There blossoms, strong in health, and will be soon
Roof-high; the wild pink crowns the garden-wall,
And with the flowers are intermingled stones
Sparry and bright, rough scatterings of the hills.
These ornaments, that fade not with the year,
A hardy Girl continues to provide;
Who, mounting fearlessly the rocky heights,
Her Father's prompt attendant, does for him
All that a boy could do, but with delight
More keen and prouder daring; yet hath she,
Within the garden, like the rest, a bed
For her own flowers and favourite herbs, a space,
By sacred charter, holden for her use.
—These, and whatever else the garden bears
Of fruit or flower, permission asked or not,
I freely gather; and my leisure draws
A not unfrequent pastime from the hum
Of bees around their range of sheltered hives
Busy in that enclosure; while the rill,

That sparkling thrids the rocks, attunes his voice
To the pure course of human life which there
Flows on in solitude. But, when the gloom
Of night is falling round my steps, then most
This Dwelling charms me; often I stop short,
(Who could refrain?) and feed by stealth my sight
With prospect of the company within,
Laid open through the blazing window:—there
I see the eldest Daughter at her wheel
Spinning amain, as if to overtake
The never-halting time; or, in her turn,
Teaching some Novice of the sisterhood
That skill in this or other household work,
Which, from her Father's honoured hand, herself,
While she was yet a little-one, had learned.
Mild Man! he is not gay, but they are gay;
And the whole house seems filled with gaiety.
—Thrice happy, then, the Mother may be deemed,
The Wife, from whose consolatory grave
I turned, that ye in mind might witness where,
And how, her Spirit yet survives on earth!"

BOOK SEVENTH

THE CHURCHYARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS—(*continued*)

ARGUMENT

Impression of these Narratives upon the Author's mind—Pastor invited to give account of certain Graves that lie apart—Clergyman and his Family—Fortunate influence of change of situation—Activity in extreme old age—Another Clergyman, a character of resolute Virtue—Lamentations over misdirected applause—Instance of less exalted excellence in a deaf man—Elevated character of a blind man—Reflection upon Blindness—Interrupted by a Peasant who passes—His animal cheerfulness and careless vivacity—He occasions a digression on the fall of beautiful and interesting Trees—A female Infant's Grave—Joy at her Birth—Sorrow at her Departure—A youthful Peasant—His patriotic enthusiasm and distinguished qualities—His untimely death—Exultation of the Wanderer, as a patriot, in this Picture—Solitary how affected—Monument of a Knight—Traditions concerning him—Peroration of the Wanderer on the transitoriness of things and the revolutions of society—Hints at his own past Calling—Thanks the Pastor.

While thus from theme to theme the Historian passed,
The words he uttered, and the scene that lay
Before our eyes, awakened in my mind
Vivid remembrance of those long-past hours;
When, in the hollow of some shadowy vale,
(What time the splendour of the setting sun
Lay beautiful on Snowdon's sovereign brow,
On Cader Idris, or huge Penmanmaur)
A wandering Youth, I listened with delight
To pastoral melody or warlike air,
Drawn from the chords of the ancient British harp
By some accomplished Master, while he sate
Amid the quiet of the green recess,
And there did inexhaustibly dispense
An interchange of soft or solemn tunes,
Tender or blithe; now, as the varying mood
Of his own spirit urged,—now, as a voice
From youth or maiden, or some honoured chief
Of his compatriot villagers (that hung
Around him, drinking in the impassioned notes
Of the time-hallowed minstrelsy) required
For their heart's ease or pleasure. Strains of power
Were they, to seize and occupy the sense;
But to a higher mark than song can reach
Rose this pure eloquence. And, when the stream
Which overflowed the soul was passed away,
A consciousness remained that it had left,
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts,
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.

"These grassy heaps lie amicably close,"
Said I, "like surges heaving in the wind
Along the surface of a mountain pool:
Whence comes it, then, that yonder we behold

Five graves, and only five, that rise together
Unsociably sequestered, and encroaching
On the smooth playground of the village-school?"

The Vicar answered,—"No disdainful pride
In them who rest beneath, nor any course
Of strange or tragic accident, hath helped
To place those hillocks in that lonely guise.
—Once more look forth, and follow with your sight
The length of road that from yon mountain's base
Through bare enclosures stretches, 'till its line
Is lost within a little tuft of trees;
Then, reappearing in a moment, quits
The cultured fields; and up the heathy waste,
Mounts, as you see, in mazes serpentine,
Led towards an easy outlet of the vale.
That little shady spot, that sylvan tuft,
By which the road is hidden, also hides
A cottage from our view; though I discern
(Ye scarcely can) amid its sheltering trees
The smokeless chimney-top.—
All unembowered
And naked stood that lowly Parsonage
(For such in truth it is, and appertains
To a small Chapel in the vale beyond)
When hither came its last Inhabitant.
Rough and forbidding were the choicest roads
By which our northern wilds could then be crossed;
And into most of these secluded vales
Was no access for wain, heavy or light.
So, at his dwelling-place the Priest arrived
With store of household goods, in panniers slung
On sturdy horses graced with jingling bells,
And on the back of more ignoble beast;
That, with like burthen of effects most prized
Or easiest carried, closed the motley train.
Young was I then, a schoolboy of eight years;
But still, methinks, I see them as they passed
In order, drawing toward their wished-for home.
—Rocked by the motion of a trusty ass
Two ruddy children hung, a well-poised freight,
Each in his basket nodding drowsily;
Their bonnets, I remember, wreathed with flowers,
Which told it was the pleasant month of June;
And, close behind, the comely Matron rode,
A woman of soft speech and gracious smile,
And with a lady's mien.—From far they came,
Even from Northumbrian hills; yet theirs had been
A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheered
By music, prank, and laughter-stirring jest;
And freak put on, and arch word dropped—to swell
The cloud of fancy and uncouth surmise
That gathered round the slowly-moving train.
—'Whence do they come? and with what errand charged?
'Belong they to the fortune-telling tribe
'Who pitch their tents under the green-wood tree?
'Or Strollers are they, furnished to enact
'Fair Rosamond, and the Children of the Wood,
'And, by that whiskered tabby's aid, set forth
'The lucky venture of sage Whittington,
'When the next village hears the show announced
'By blast of trumpet?' Plenteous was the growth
Of such conjectures, overheard, or seen
On many a staring countenance portrayed
Of boor or burgher, as they marched along.
And more than once their steadiness of face
Was put to proof, and exercise supplied
To their inventive humour, by stern looks,
And questions in authoritative tone,
From some staid guardian of the public peace,
Checking the sober steed on which he rode,
In his suspicious wisdom; oftener still,
By notice indirect, or blunt demand
From traveller halting in his own despite,
A simple curiosity to ease:
Of which adventures, that beguiled and cheered
Their grave migration, the good pair would tell,
With undiminished glee, in hoary age.

A Priest he was by function; but his course
From his youth up, and high as manhood's noon,
(The hour of life to which he then was brought)
Had been irregular, I might say, wild;
By books unsteadied, by his pastoral care
Too little checked. An active, ardent mind;
A fancy pregnant with resource and scheme
To cheat the sadness of a rainy day;
Hands apt for all ingenious arts and games;
A generous spirit, and a body strong
To cope with stoutest champions of the bowl—
Had earned for him sure welcome, and the rights
Of a prized visitant, in the jolly hall
Of country 'squire; or at the statelier board
Of duke or earl, from scenes of courtly pomp
Withdrawn,—to while away the summer hours
In condescension among rural guests.

With these high comrades he had revelled long,
Frolicked industriously, a simple Clerk
By hopes of coming patronage beguiled
Till the heart sickened. So, each loftier aim
Abandoning and all his showy friends,
For a life's stay (slender it was, but sure)
He turned to this secluded chapelry;
That had been offered to his doubtful choice
By an unthought-of patron. Bleak and bare
They found the cottage, their allotted home;
Naked without, and rude within; a spot
With which the Cure not long had been endowed:
And far remote the chapel stood,—remote,
And, from his Dwelling, unapproachable,
Save through a gap high in the hills, an opening
Shadeless and shelterless, by driving showers
Frequented, and beset with howling winds.
Yet cause was none, whate'er regret might hang
On his own mind, to quarrel with the choice
Or the necessity that fixed him here;
Apart from old temptations, and constrained
To punctual labour in his sacred charge.
See him a constant preacher to the poor!
And visiting, though not with saintly zeal,
Yet, when need was, with no reluctant will,
The sick in body, or distrest in mind;
And, by a salutary change, compelled
To rise from timely sleep, and meet the day
With no engagement, in his thoughts, more proud
Or splendid than his garden could afford,
His fields, or mountains by the heath-cock ranged
Or the wild brooks; from which he now returned
Contented to partake the quiet meal
Of his own board, where sat his gentle Mate
And three fair Children, plentifully fed
Though simply, from their little household farm;
Nor wanted timely treat of fish or fowl
By nature yielded to his practised hand;—
To help the small but certain comings-in
Of that spare benefice. Yet not the less
Theirs was a hospitable board, and theirs
A charitable door.
So days and years
Passed on;—the inside of that rugged house
Was trimmed and brightened by the Matron's care,
And gradually enriched with things of price,
Which might be lacked for use or ornament.
What, though no soft and costly sofa there
Insidiously stretched out its lazy length,
And no vain mirror glittered upon the walls,
Yet were the windows of the low abode
By shutters weather-fended, which at once
Repelled the storm and deadened its loud roar.
There snow-white curtains hung in decent folds;
Tough moss, and long-enduring mountain plants,
That creep along the ground with sinuous trail,
Were nicely braided; and composed a work
Like Indian mats, that with appropriate grace

Lay at the threshold and the inner doors;
And a fair carpet, woven of homespun wool
But tinctured daintily with florid hues,
For seemliness and warmth, on festal days,
Covered the smooth blue slabs of mountain-stone
With which the parlour-floor, in simplest guise
Of pastoral homesteads, had been long inlaid.

Those pleasing works the Housewife's skill produced:
Meanwhile the unsedentary Master's hand
Was busier with his task—to rid, to plant,
To rear for food, for shelter, and delight;
A thriving covert! And when wishes, formed
In youth, and sanctioned by the riper mind,
Restored me to my native valley, here
To end my days; well pleased was I to see
The once-bare cottage, on the mountain-side,
Screened from assault of every bitter blast;
While the dark shadows of the summer leaves
Danced in the breeze, chequering its mossy roof.
Time, which had thus afforded willing help
To beautify with nature's fairest growths
This rustic tenement, had gently shed,
Upon its Master's frame, a wintry grace;
The comeliness of unenfeebled age.

But how could I say, gently? for he still
Retained a flashing eye, a burning palm,
A stirring foot, a head which beat at nights
Upon its pillow with a thousand schemes.
Few likings had he dropped, few pleasures lost;
Generous and charitable, prompt to serve;
And still his harsher passions kept their hold—
Anger and indignation. Still he loved
The sound of titled names, and talked in glee
Of long-past banquetings with high-born friends:
Then, from those lulling fits of vain delight
Uproused by recollected injury, railed
At their false ways disdainfully,—and oft
In bitterness, and with a threatening eye
Of fire, incensed beneath its hoary brow.
—Those transports, with staid looks of pure good-will,
And with soft smile, his consort would reprove.
She, far behind him in the race of years,
Yet keeping her first mildness, was advanced
Far nearer, in the habit of her soul,
To that still region whither all are bound,
Him might we liken to the setting sun
As seen not seldom on some gusty day,
Struggling and bold, and shining from the west
With an inconstant and unmellowed light;
She was a soft attendant cloud, that hung
As if with wish to veil the restless orb;
From which it did itself imbibe a ray
Of pleasing lustre.—But no more of this;
I better love to sprinkle on the sod
That now divides the pair, or rather say,
That still unites them, praises, like heaven's dew,
Without reserve descending upon both.

Our very first in eminence of years
This old Man stood, the patriarch of the Vale!
And, to his unmolested mansion, death
Had never come, through space of forty years;
Sparing both old and young in that abode.
Suddenly then they disappeared: not twice
Had summer scorched the fields; not twice had fallen,
On those high peaks, the first autumnal snow,
Before the greedy visiting was closed,
And the long-privileged house left empty—swept
As by a plague. Yet no rapacious plague
Had been among them; all was gentle death,
One after one, with intervals of peace.
A happy consummation! an accord
Sweet, perfect, to be wished for! save that here
Was something which to mortal sense might sound
Like harshness,—that the old grey-headed Sire,
The oldest, he was taken last; survived
When the meek Partner of his age, his Son,
His Daughter, and that late and high-prized gift,
His little smiling Grandchild, were no more.

'All gone all vanished! he deprived and bare,
'How will he face the remnant of his life?
'What will become of him?' we said, and mused
In sad conjectures—'Shall we meet him now
'Haunting with rod and line the craggy brooks?
'Or shall we overhear him, as we pass,
'Striving to entertain the lonely hours
'With music?' (for he had not ceased to touch
The harp or viol which himself had framed,
For their sweet purposes, with perfect skill.)
'What titles will he keep? will he remain
'Musician, gardener, builder, mechanist,
'A planter, and a rearer from the seed?
'A man of hope and forward-looking mind
'Even to the last!'—Such was he, unsubdued.
But Heaven was gracious; yet a little while,
And this Survivor, with his cheerful throng
Of open projects, and his inward hoard
Of unsunned griefs, too many and too keen,
Was overcome by unexpected sleep,
In one blest moment. Like a shadow thrown
Softly and lightly from a passing cloud,
Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay
For noontide solace on the summer grass,
The warm lap of his mother earth: and so,
Their lenient term of separation past,
That family (whose graves you there behold)
By yet a higher privilege once more
Were gathered to each other."
                                        Calm of mind
And silence waited on these closing words;
Until the Wanderer (whether moved by fear
Lest in those passages of life were some
That might have touched the sick heart of his Friend
Too nearly, or intent to reinforce
His own firm spirit in degree deprest
By tender sorrow for our mortal state)
Thus silence broke:—"Behold a thoughtless Man
From vice and premature decay preserved
By useful habits, to a fitter soil
Transplanted ere too late.—The hermit, lodged
Amid the untrodden desert, tells his beads,
With each repeating its allotted prayer,
And thus divides and thus relieves the time;
Smooth task, with *his* compared, whose mind could string,
Not scantily, bright minutes on the thread
Of keen domestic anguish; and beguile
A solitude, unchosen, unprofessed;
Till gentlest death released him.
                                        Far from us
Be the desire—too curiously to ask
How much of this is but the blind result
Of cordial spirits and vital temperament,
And what to higher powers is justly due.
But you, Sir, know that in a neighbouring vale
A Priest abides before whose life such doubts
Fall to the ground; whose gifts of nature lie
Retired from notice, lost in attributes
Of reason, honourably effaced by debts
Which her poor treasure-house is content to owe,
And conquest over her dominion gained,
To which her frowardness must needs submit.
In this one Man is shown a temperance—proof
Against all trials; industry severe
And constant as the motion of the day;
Stern self-denial round him spread, with shade
That might be deemed forbidding, did not there
All generous feelings flourish and rejoice;
Forbearance, charity in deed and thought,
And resolution competent to take
Out of the bosom of simplicity
All that her holy customs recommend,
And the best ages of the world prescribe.
—Preaching, administering, in every work
Of his sublime vocation, in the walks
Of worldly intercourse between man and man,
And in his humble dwelling, he appears
A labourer, with moral virtue girt,
With spiritual graces, like a glory, crowned."

"Doubt can be none," the Pastor said, "for whom
This portraiture is sketched. The great, the good,
The well-beloved, the fortunate, the wise,—
These titles emperors and chiefs have borne,
Honour assumed or given: and him, the WONDERFUL,

Our simple shepherds, speaking from the heart,
Deservedly have styled.—From his abode
In a dependent chapelry that lies
Behind yon hill, a poor and rugged wild,
Which in his soul he lovingly embraced,
And, having once espoused, would never quit;
Into its graveyard will ere long be borne
That lowly, great, good Man. A simple stone
May cover him; and by its help, perchance,
A century shall hear his name pronounced,
With images attendant on the sound;
Then, shall the slowly-gathering twilight close
In utter night; and of his course remain
No cognizable vestiges, no more
Than of this breath, which shapes itself in words
To speak of him, and instantly dissolves."

The Pastor, pressed by thoughts which round his theme
Still lingered, after a brief pause, resumed;
"Noise is there not enough in doleful war,
But that the heaven-born poet must stand forth,
And lend the echoes of his sacred shell,
To multiply and aggravate the din?
Pangs are there not enough in hopeless love—
And, in requited passion, all too much
Of turbulence, anxiety, and fear—
But that the minstrel of the rural shade
Must tune his pipe, insidiously to nurse
The perturbation in the suffering breast,
And propagate its kind, far as he may?
—Ah who (and with such rapture as befits
The hallowed theme) will rise and celebrate
The good man's purposes and deeds; retrace
His struggles, his discomfitures deplore,
His triumphs hail, and glorify his end;
That virtue, like the fumes and vapoury clouds
Through fancy's heat redounding in the brain,
And like the soft infections of the heart,
By charm of measured words may spread o'er field,
Hamlet, and town; and piety survive
Upon the lips of men in hall or bower;
Not for reproof, but high and warm delight,
And grave encouragement, by song inspired?
—Vain thought! but wherefore murmur or repine?
The memory of the just survives in heaven:
And, without sorrow, will the ground receive
That venerable clay. Meanwhile the best
Of what lies here confines us to degrees
In excellence less difficult to reach,
And milder worth: nor need we travel far
From those to whom our last regards were paid,
For such example.
                    Almost at the root
Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
Oft stretches towards me, like a long straight path
Traced faintly in the greensward; there, beneath
A plain blue stone, a gentle Dalesman lies,
From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn
The precious gift of hearing. He grew up
From year to year in loneliness of soul;
And this deep mountain-valley was to him
Soundless, with all its streams. The bird of dawn
Did never rouse this Cottager from sleep
With startling summons; not for his delight
The vernal cuckoo shouted; not for him
Murmured the labouring bee. When stormy winds
Were working the broad bosom of the lake
Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,
The agitated scene before his eye
Was silent as a picture: evermore
Were all things silent, wheresoe'er he moved.
Yet, by the solace of his own pure thoughts
Upheld, he duteously pursued the round
Of rural labours; the steep mountain-side
Ascended, with his staff and faithful dog;
The plough he guided, and the scythe he swayed;
And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
All watchful and industrious as he was,
He wrought not: neither field nor flock he owned:
No wish for wealth had place within his mind;
Nor husband's love, nor father's hope or care.

Though born a younger brother, need was none
That from the floor of his paternal home
He should depart, to plant himself anew.
And when, mature in manhood, he beheld
His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
Of rights to him; but he remained well pleased,
By the pure bond of independent love,
An inmate of a second family;
The fellow-labourer and friend of him
To whom the small inheritance had fallen.
—Nor deem that his mild presence was a weight
That pressed upon his brother's house; for books
Were ready comrades whom he could not tire;
Of whose society the blameless Man
Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
Even to old age, with unabated charm
Beguiled his leisure hours; refreshed his thoughts;
Beyond its natural elevation raised
His introverted spirit; and bestowed
Upon his life an outward dignity
Which all acknowledged. The dark winter night,
The stormy day, each had its own resource;
Song of the muses, sage historic tale,
Science severe, or word of holy Writ
Announcing immortality and joy
To the assembled spirits of just men
Made perfect, and from injury secure.
—Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the field,
To no perverse suspicion he gave way,
No languor, peevishness, nor vain complaint:
And they, who were about him, did not fail
In reverence, or in courtesy; they prized
His gentle manners: and his peaceful smiles,
The gleams of his slow-varying countenance,
Were met with answering sympathy and love.

At length, when sixty years and five were told,
A slow disease insensibly consumed
The powers of nature: and a few short steps
Of friends and kindred bore him from his home
(Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)
To the profounder stillness of the grave.
—Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief;
Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude.
And now that monumental stone preserves
His name, and unambitiously relates
How long, and by what kindly outward aids,
And in what pure contentedness of mind,
The sad privation was by him endured.
—And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing sound
Was wasted on the good Man's living ear,
Hath now its own peculiar sanctity;
And, at the touch of every wandering breeze,
Murmurs, not idly, o'er his peaceful grave.

Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of things!
Guide of our way, mysterious comforter!
Whose sacred influence, spread through earth and heaven,
We all too thanklessly participate,
Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him
Whose place of rest is near yon ivied porch
Yet, of the wild brooks ask if he complained;
Ask of the channelled rivers if they held
A safer, easier, more determined, course.
What terror doth it strike into the mind
To think of one, blind and alone, advancing
Straight toward some precipice's airy brink!
But, timely warned, *He* would have stayed his steps,
Protected, say enlightened, by his ear;
And on the very edge of vacancy
Not more endangered than a man whose eye
Beholds the gulf beneath.—No floweret blooms
Throughout the lofty range of these rough hills,
Nor in the woods, that could from him conceal
Its birth-place; none whose figure did not live
Upon his touch. The bowels of the earth
Enriched with knowledge his industrious mind;
The ocean paid him tribute from the stores
Lodged in her bosom; and, by science led,

His genius mounted to the plains of heaven.
—Methinks I see him—how his eye-balls rolled,
Beneath his ample brow, in darkness paired,—
But each instinct with spirit; and the frame
Of the whole countenance alive with thought,
Fancy, and understanding; while the voice
Discoursed of natural or moral truth
With eloquence, and such authentic power,
That, in his presence, humbler knowledge stood
Abashed, and tender pity overawed."

"A noble—and, to unreflecting minds,
A marvellous spectacle," the Wanderer said,
"Beings like these present! But proof abounds
Upon the earth that faculties, which seem
Extinguished, do not, *therefore*, cease to be.
And to the mind among her powers of sense
This transfer is permitted,—not alone
That the bereft their recompense may win;
But for remoter purposes of love
And charity; nor last nor least for this,
That to the imagination may be given
A type and shadow of an awful truth;
How, likewise, under sufferance divine,
Darkness is banished from the realms of death,
By man's imperishable spirit, quelled.
Unto the men who see not as we see
Futurity was thought, in ancient times,
To be laid open, and they prophesied.
And know we not that from the blind have flowed
The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre;
And wisdom married to immortal verse?"

Among the humbler Worthies, at our feet
Lying insensible to human praise,
Love, or regret,—*whose* lineaments would next
Have been portrayed, I guess not; but it chanced
That, near the quiet churchyard where we sate,
A team of horses, with a ponderous freight
Pressing behind, adown a rugged slope,
Whose sharp descent confounded their array,
Came at that moment, ringing noisily.

"Here," said the Pastor, "do we muse, and mourn
The waste of death; and lo! the giant oak
Stretched on his bier—that massy timber wain;
Nor fail to note the Man who guides the team."

He was a peasant of the lowest class:
Grey locks profusely round his temples hung
In clustering curls, like ivy, which the bite
Of winter cannot thin; the fresh air lodged
Within his cheek, as light within a cloud;
And he returned our greeting with a smile.
When he had passed, the Solitary spake;
"A Man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
And confident to-morrows; with a face
Not worldly-minded, for it bears too much
Of Nature's impress,—gaiety and health,
Freedom and hope; but keen, withal, and shrewd.
His gestures note,—and hark! his tones of voice
Are all vivacious as his mien and looks."

The Pastor answered: "You have read him well.
Year after year is added to his store
With *silent* increase: summers, winters—past,
Past or to come; yea, boldly might I say,
Ten summers and ten winters of a space
That lies beyond life's ordinary bounds,
Upon his sprightly vigour cannot fix
The obligation of an anxious mind,
A pride in having, or a fear to lose;
Possessed like outskirts of some large domain,
By any one more thought of than by him
Who holds the land in fee, its careless lord!
Yet is the creature rational, endowed
With foresight; hears, too, every sabbath day,
The christian promise with attentive ear;
Nor will, I trust, the Majesty of Heaven
Reject the incense offered up by him,
Though of the kind which beasts and birds present
In grove or pasture; cheerfulness of soul,
From trepidation and repining free.
How many scrupulous worshippers fall down
Upon their knees, and daily homage pay
Less worthy, less religious even, than his!

This qualified respect, the old Man's due,
Is paid without reluctance; but in truth,"
(Said the good Vicar with a fond half-smile)
"I feel at times a motion of despite
Towards one, whose bold contrivances and skill,
As you have seen, bear such conspicuous part
In works of havoc; taking from these vales,
One after one, their proudest ornaments.
Full oft his doings leave me to deplore
Tall ash-tree, sown by winds, by vapours nursed,
In the dry crannies of the pendent rocks;
Light birch, aloft upon the horizon's edge,
A veil of glory for the ascending moon;
And oak whose roots by noontide dew were damped,
And on whose forehead inaccessible
The raven lodged in safety.—Many a ship
Launched into Morecamb-bay to *him* hath owed
Her strong knee-timbers, and the mast that bears
The loftiest of her pendants; He, from park
Or forest, fetched the enormous axle-tree
That whirls (how slow itself!) ten thousand spindles:
And the vast engine labouring in the mine,
Content with meaner prowess, must have lacked
The trunk and body of its marvellous strength,
If his undaunted enterprise had failed
Among the mountain coves.
Yon household fir,
A guardian planted to fence off the blast,
But towering high the roof above, as if
Its humble destination were forgot—
That sycamore, which annually holds[1]
Within its shade, as in a stately tent
On all sides open to the fanning breeze,
A grave assemblage, seated while they shear
The fleece-encumbered flock—the JOYFUL ELM,
Around whose trunk the maidens dance in May—
And the LORD'S OAK—would plead their several rights
In vain, if he were master of their fate;
His sentence to the axe would doom them all.
But, green in age and lusty as he is,
And promising to keep his hold on earth
Less, as might seem, in rivalship with men
Than with the forest's more enduring growth,
His own appointed hour will come at last;
And, like the haughty Spoilers of the world,
This keen Destroyer, in his turn, must fall.

Now from the living pass we once again:
From Age," the Priest continued, "turn your thoughts;
From Age, that often unlamented drops,
And mark that daisied hillock, three spans long!
—Seven lusty Sons sate daily round the board
Of Gold-rill side; and, when the hope had ceased
Of other progeny, a Daughter then
Was given, the crowning bounty of the whole;
And so acknowledged with a tremulous joy
Felt to the centre of that heavenly calm
With which by nature every mother's soul
Is stricken in the moment when her throes
Are ended, and her ears have heard the cry
Which tells her that a living child is born;
And she lies conscious, in a blissful rest,
That the dread storm is weathered by them both.

The Father—him at this unlooked-for gift
A bolder transport seizes. From the side
Of his bright hearth, and from his open door,
Day after day the gladness is diffused
To all that come, almost to all that pass;
Invited, summoned, to partake the cheer
Spread on the never-empty board, and drink
Health and good wishes to his new-born girl,
From cups replenished by his joyous hand.
—Those seven fair brothers variously were moved
Each by the thoughts best suited to his years:
But most of all and with most thankful mind
The hoary grandsire felt himself enriched;
A happiness that ebbed not, but remained
To fill the total measure of his soul!
—From the low tenement, his own abode,
Whither, as to a little private cell,

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[1] See Note.

He had withdrawn from bustle, care, and noise,
To spend the sabbath of old age in peace,
Once every day he duteously repaired
To rock the cradle of the slumbering babe:
For in that female infant's name he heard
The silent name of his departed wife;
Heart-stirring music! hourly heard that name;
Full blest he was, 'Another Margaret Green,'
Oft did he say, 'was come to Gold-rill side.'

Oh! pang unthought of, as the precious boon
Itself had been unlooked-for; oh! dire stroke
Of desolating anguish for them all!
—Just as the Child could totter on the floor,
And, by some friendly finger's help upstayed,
Range round the garden walk, while she perchance
Was catching at some novelty of spring,
Ground-flower, or glossy insect from its cell
Drawn by the sunshine—at that hopeful season
The winds of March, smiting insidiously,
Raised in the tender passage of the throat
Viewless obstruction; whence, all unforewarned,
The household lost their pride and soul's delight.
—But time hath power to soften all regrets,
And prayer and thought can bring to worst distress
Due resignation. Therefore, though some tears
Fail not to spring from either Parent's eye
Oft as they hear of sorrow like their own,
Yet this departed Little-one, too long
The innocent troubler of their quiet, sleeps
In what may now be called a peaceful bed.

On a bright day—so calm and bright, it seemed
To us, with our sad spirits, heavenly-fair—
These mountains echoed to an unknown sound;
A volley, thrice repeated o'er the Corse
Let down into the hollow of that grave,
Whose shelving sides are red with naked mould.
Ye rains of April, duly wet this earth!
Spare, burning sun of midsummer, these sods,
That they may knit together, and therewith
Our thoughts unite in kindred quietness!
Nor so the Valley shall forget her loss.
Dear Youth, by young and old alike beloved,
To me as precious as my own!—Green herbs
May creep (I wish that they would softly creep)
Over thy last abode, and we may pass
Reminded less imperiously of thee;—
The ridge itself may sink into the breast
Of earth, the great abyss, and be no more;
Yet shall not thy remembrance leave our hearts,
Thy image disappear!
The Mountain-ash
No eye can overlook, when 'mid a grove
Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
Decked with autumnal berries, that outshine
Spring's richest blossoms; and ye may have marked,
By a brook-side or solitary tarn,
How she her station doth adorn: the pool
Glows at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
Are brightened round her. In his native vale
Such and so glorious did this Youth appear;
A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
By all the graces with which nature's hand
Had lavishly arrayed him. As old bards
Tell in their idle songs of wandering gods,
Pan or Apollo, veiled in human form:
Yet, like the sweet-breathed violet of the shade
Discovered in their own despite to sense
Of mortals (if such fables without blame
May find chance-mention on this sacred ground)
So, through a simple rustic garb's disguise,
And through the impediment of rural cares,
In him revealed a scholar's genius shone;
And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
In him the spirit of a hero walked
Our unpretending valley.—How the quoit
Whizzed from the Stripling's arm! If touched by him,
The inglorious foot-ball mounted to the pitch

Of the lark's flight,—or shaped a rainbow curve,
Aloft, in prospect of the shouting field!
The indefatigable fox had learned
To dread his perseverance in the chase.
With admiration would he lift his eyes
To the wide-ruling eagle, and his hand
Was loth to assault the majesty he loved:
Else had the strongest fastnesses proved weak
To guard the royal brood. The sailing glead,
The wheeling swallow, and the darting snipe;
The sportive sea-gull dancing with the waves,
And cautious water-fowl, from distant climes,
Fixed at their seat, the centre of the Mere;
Were subject to young Oswald's steady aim,
And lived by his forbearance.
From the coast
Of France a boastful Tyrant hurled his threats;
Our Country marked the preparation vast
Of hostile forces; and she called—with voice
That filled her plains, that reached her utmost shores,
And in remotest vales was heard—to arms!
—Then, for the first time, here you might have seen
The shepherd's grey to martial scarlet changed,
That flashed uncouthly through the woods and fields.
Ten hardy Striplings, all in bright attire,
And graced with shining weapons, weekly marched,
From this lone valley, to a central spot
Where, in assemblage with the flower and choice
Of the surrounding district, they might learn
The rudiments of war; ten—hardy, strong,
And valiant; but young Oswald, like a chief
And yet a modest comrade, led them forth
From their shy solitude, to face the world,
With a gay confidence and seemly pride;
Measuring the soil beneath their happy feet
Like Youths released from labour, and yet bound
To most laborious service, though to them
A festival of unencumbered ease;
The inner spirit keeping holiday,
Like vernal ground to sabbath sunshine left.

Oft have I marked him, at some leisure hour,
Stretched on the grass, or seated in the shade,
Among his fellows, while an ample map
Before their eyes lay carefully outspread,
From which the gallant teacher would discourse,
Now pointing this way, and now that.—'Here flows,'
Thus would he say, 'the Rhine, that famous stream!
'Eastward, the Danube toward this inland sea,
'A mightier river, winds from realm to realm;
'And, like a serpent, shows his glittering back
'Bespotted—with innumerable isles:
'Here reigns the Russian, there the Turk; observe
'His capital city!' Thence, along a tract
Of livelier interest to his hopes and fears,
His finger moved, distinguishing the spots
Where wide-spread conflict then most fiercely raged;
Nor left unstigmatized those fatal fields
On which the sons of mighty Germany
Were taught a base submission.—'Here behold
'A nobler race, the Switzers, and their land,
'Vales deeper far than these of ours, huge woods,
'And mountains white with everlasting snow!'
—And, surely, he, that spake with kindling brow,
Was a true patriot, hopeful as the best
Of that young peasantry, who, in our days,
Have fought and perished for Helvetia's rights—
Ah, not in vain!—or those who, in old time,
For work of happier issue, to the side
Of Tell came trooping from a thousand huts,
When he had risen alone! No braver Youth
Descended from Judean heights, to march
With righteous Joshua; nor appeared in arms

When grove was felled, and altar was cast down,
And Gideon blew the trumpet, soul-inflamed,
And strong in hatred of idolatry."

The Pastor, even as if by these last words
Raised from his seat within the chosen shade,
Moved toward the grave;—instinctively his steps
We followed; and my voice with joy exclaimed:
"Power to the Oppressors of the world is given,
A might of which they dream not. Oh! the curse,
To be the awakener of divinest thoughts,
Father and founder of exalted deeds;
And, to whole nations bound in servile straits,
The liberal donor of capacities
More than heroic! this to be, nor yet
Have sense of one connatural wish, nor yet
Deserve the least return of human thanks;
Winning no recompense but deadly hate
With pity mixed, astonishment with scorn!"

When this involuntary strain had ceased,
The Pastor said: "So Providence is served;
The forkèd weapon of the skies can send
Illumination into deep, dark holds,
Which the mild sunbeam hath not power to pierce.
Ye Thrones that have defied remorse, and cast
Pity away, soon shall ye quake with *fear!*
For, not unconscious of the mighty debt
Which to outrageous wrong the sufferer owes,
Europe, through all her habitable bounds,
Is thirsting for *their* overthrow, who yet
Survive, as pagan temples stood of yore,
By horror of their impious rites, preserved;
Are still permitted to extend their pride,
Like cedars on the top of Lebanon
Darkening the sun.
But less impatient thoughts,
And love 'all hoping and expecting all,'
This hallowed grave demands, where rests in peace
A humble champion of the better cause,
A Peasant-youth, so call him, for he asked
No higher name; in whom our country showed,
As in a favourite son, most beautiful.
In spite of vice, and misery, and disease,
Spread with the spreading of her wealthy arts,
England, the ancient and the free, appeared
In him to stand before my swimming eyes,
Unconquerably virtuous and secure.
—No more of this, lest I offend his dust:
Short was his life, and a brief tale remains.

One day—a summer's day of annual pomp
And solemn chase—from morn to sultry noon
His steps had followed, fleetest of the fleet,
The red-deer driven along its native heights
With cry of hound and horn; and, from that toil
Returned with sinews weakened and relaxed,
This generous Youth, too negligent of self,
Plunged—'mid a gay and busy throng convened
To wash the fleeces of his Father's flock—
Into the chilling flood. Convulsions dire
Seized him, that self-same night; and through the space
Of twelve ensuing days his frame was wrenched,
Till nature rested from her work in death.
To him, thus snatched away, his comrades paid
A soldier's honours. At his funeral hour
Bright was the sun, the sky a cloudless blue—
A golden lustre slept upon the hills;
And if by chance a stranger, wandering there,
From some commanding eminence had looked
Down on this spot, well pleased would he have seen
A glittering spectacle; but every face
Was pallid: seldom hath that eye been moist
With tears, that wept not then; nor were the few,
Who from their dwellings came not forth to join
In this sad service, less disturbed than we.
They started at the tributary peal
Of instantaneous thunder, which announced,

Through the still air; the closing of the Grave;
And distant mountains echoed with a sound
Of lamentation, never heard before!"

The Pastor ceased.—My venerable Friend
Victoriously upraised his clear bright eye;
And, when that eulogy was ended, stood
Enrapt, as if his inward sense perceived
The prolongation of some still response,
Sent by the ancient Soul of this wide land,
The Spirit of its mountains and its seas,
Its cities, temples, fields, its awful power,
Its rights and virtues—by that Deity
Descending, and supporting his pure heart
With patriotic confidence and joy.
And, at the last of those memorial words,
The pining Solitary turned aside;
Whether through manly instinct to conceal
Tender emotions spreading from the heart
To his worn cheek; or with uneasy shame
For those cold humours of habitual spleen
That, fondly seeking in dispraise of man
Solace and self-excuse, had sometimes urged
To self-abuse a not ineloquent tongue.
—Right toward the sacred Edifice his steps
Had been directed; and we saw him now
Intent upon a monumental stone,
Whose uncouth form was grafted on the wall,
Or rather seemed to have grown into the side
Of the rude pile; as oft-times trunks of trees,
Where nature works in wild and craggy spots,
Are seen incorporate with the living rock—
To endure for aye. The Vicar, taking note
Of his employment, with a courteous smile
Exclaimed—
"The sagest Antiquarian's eye
That task would foil;" then, letting fall his voice
While he advanced, thus spake: "Tradition tells
That, in Eliza's golden days, a Knight
Came on a war-horse sumptuously attired,
And fixed his home in this sequestered vale.
'Tis left untold if here he first drew breath,
Or as a stranger reached this deep recess,
Unknowing and unknown. A pleasing thought
I sometimes entertain, that haply bound
To Scotland's court in service of his Queen,
Or sent on mission to some northern Chief
Of England's realm, this vale he might have seen
With transient observation; and thence caught
An image fair, which, brightening in his soul
When joy of war and pride of chivalry
Languished beneath accumulated years,
Had power to draw him from the world, resolved
To make that paradise his chosen home
To which his peaceful fancy oft had turned.

Vague thoughts are these; but, if belief may rest
Upon unwritten story fondly traced
From sire to son, in this obscure retreat
The Knight arrived, with spear and shield, and borne
Upon a Charger gorgeously bedecked
With broidered housings. And the lofty Steed—
His sole companion, and his faithful friend,
Whom he, in gratitude, let loose to range
In fertile pastures—was beheld with eyes
Of admiration and delightful awe,
By those untravelled Dalesmen. With less pride,
Yet free from touch of envious discontent,
They saw a mansion at his bidding rise,
Like a bright star, amid the lowly band
Of their rude homesteads. Here the Warrior dwelt;
And, in that mansion, children of his own,
Or kindred, gathered round him. As a tree
That falls and disappears, the house is gone;
And, through improvidence or want of love
For ancient worth and honourable things,
The spear and shield are vanished, which the Knight
Hung in his rustic hall. One ivied arch
Myself have seen, a gateway, last remains
Of that foundation in domestic care
Raised by his hands. And now no trace is left
Of the mild-hearted Champion, save this stone,
Faithless memorial! and his family name
Borne by yon clustering cottages, that sprang

From out the ruins of his stately lodge:
These, and the name and title at full length,—
Sir Alfred Irthing, with appropriate words
Accompanied, still extant, in a wreath
Or posy, girding round the several fronts
Of three clear-sounding and harmonious bells,
That in the steeple hang, his pious gift."

"So fails, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,"
The grey-haired Wanderer pensively exclaimed,
"All that this world is proud of. From their spheres
The stars of human glory are cast down;
Perish the roses and the flowers of kings,[1]
Princes, and emperors, and the crowns and palms
Of all the mighty, withered and consumed!
Nor is power given to lowliest innocence
Long to protect her own. The man himself
Departs; and soon is spent the line of those
Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,
In heart or soul, in station or pursuit,
Did most resemble him. Degrees and ranks,
Fraternities and orders—heaping high
New wealth upon the burthen of the old,
And placing trust in privilege confirmed
And re-confirmed—are scoffed at with a smile
Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand
Of Desolation, aimed: to slow decline
These yield, and these to sudden overthrow:
Their virtue, service, happiness, and state
Expire; and nature's pleasant robe of green,
Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps
Their monuments and their memory. The vast Frame
Of social nature changes evermore
Her organs and her members, with decay
Restless, and restless generation, powers
And functions dying and produced at need,—
And by this law the mighty whole subsists:
With an ascent and progress in the main;
Yet, oh! how disproportioned to the hopes
And expectations of self-flattering minds!

The courteous Knight, whose bones are here interred,
Lived in an age conspicuous as our own
For strife and ferment in the minds of men;
Whence alteration in the forms of things,
Various and vast. A memorable age!
Which did to him assign a pensive lot—
To linger 'mid the last of those bright clouds
That, on the steady breeze of honour, sailed
In long procession calm and beautiful.
He who had seen his own bright order fade,
And its devotion gradually decline,
(While war, relinquishing the lance and shield,
Her temper changed, and bowed to other laws)
Had also witnessed, in his morn of life,
That violent commotion, which o'erthrew,
In town and city and sequestered glen,
Altar, and cross, and church of solemn roof,
And old religious house—pile after pile;
And shook their tenants out into the fields,
Like wild beasts without home! Their hour was come;
But why no softening thought of gratitude,
No just remembrance, scruple, or wise doubt?
Benevolence is mild; nor borrows help,
Save at worst need, from bold impetuous force,
Fitliest allied to anger and revenge.
But Human-kind rejoices in the might
Of mutability; and airy hopes,
Dancing around her, hinder and disturb
Those meditations of the soul that feed
The retrospective virtues. Festive songs
Break from the maddened nations at the sight
Of sudden overthrow; and cold neglect
Is the sure consequence of slow decay.

Even," said the Wanderer, "as that courteous Knight,
Bound by his vow to labour for redress
Of all who suffer wrong, and to enact
By sword and lance the law of gentleness,

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[1] See Note.

(If I may venture of myself to speak,
Trusting that not incongruously I blend
Low things with lofty) I too shall be doomed
To outlive the kindly use and fair esteem
Of the poor calling which my youth embraced
With no unworthy prospect. But enough;
—Thoughts crowd upon me—and 'twere seemlier now
To stop, and yield our gracious Teacher thanks
For the pathetic records which his voice
Hath here delivered; words of heartfelt truth,
Tending to patience when affliction strikes;
To hope and love; to confident repose
In God; and reverence for the dust of Man."

BOOK EIGHTH

THE PARSONAGE

ARGUMENT

Pastor's apology and apprehensions that he might have detained his Auditors too long, with the Pastor's invitation to his house—Solitary disinclined to comply—Rallies the Wanderer—And playfully draws a comparison between his itinerant profession and that of the Knight-errant—Which leads to Wanderer's giving an account of changes in the Country from the manufacturing spirit—Favourable effects—The other side of the picture, and chiefly as it has affected the humbler classes—Wanderer asserts the hollowness of all national grandeur if unsupported by moral worth—Physical science unable to support itself—Lamentations over an excess of manufacturing industry among the humbler Classes of Society—Picture of a Child employed in a Cotton-mill—Ignorance and degradation of Children among the agricultural Population reviewed—Conversation broken off by a renewed Invitation from the Pastor—Path leading to his House—Its appearance described—His Daughter—His Wife—His Son (a Boy) enters with his Companion—Their happy appearance—The Wanderer how affected by the sight of them.

THE pensive Sceptic of the lonely vale
To those acknowledgments subscribed his own,
With a sedate compliance, which the Priest
Failed not to notice, inly pleased, and said:—
"If ye, by whom invited I began
These narratives of calm and humble life,
Be satisfied, 'tis well,—the end is gained;
And, in return for sympathy bestowed
And patient listening, thanks accept from me.
—Life, death, eternity! momentous themes
Are they—and might demand a seraph's tongue,
Were they not equal to their own support;
And therefore no incompetence of mine
Could do them wrong. The universal forms
Of human nature, in a spot like this,
Present themselves at once to all men's view:
Ye wished for act and circumstance, that make
The individual known and understood;
And such as my best judgment could select
From what the place afforded, have been given;
Though apprehensions crossed me that my zeal
To his might well be likened, who unlocks
A cabinet stored with gems and pictures—draws
His treasures forth, soliciting regard
To this, and this, as worthier than the last,
Till the spectator, who awhile was pleased
More than the exhibitor himself, becomes
Weary and faint, and longs to be released.
—But let us hence! my dwelling is in sight,
And there—"
At this the Solitary shrunk
With backward will; but, wanting not address
That inward motion to disguise, he said
To his Compatriot, smiling as he spake;
—"The peaceable remains of this good Knight
Would be disturbed, I fear, with wrathful scorn,
If consciousness could reach him where he lies
That one, albeit of these degenerate times,
Deploring changes past, or dreading change
Foreseen, had dared to couple, even in thought,

The fine vocation of the sword and lance
With the gross aims and body-bending toil
Of a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
Pitied, and, where they are not known, despised.

Yet, by the good Knight's leave, the two estates
Are graced with some resemblance. Errant those,
Exiles and wanderers—and the like are these;
Who, with their burthen, traverse hill and dale,
Carrying relief for nature's simple wants.
—What though no higher recompense be sought
Than honest maintenance, by irksome toil
Full oft procured, yet may they claim respect,
Among the intelligent, for what this course
Enables them to be and to perform.
Their tardy steps give leisure to observe,
While solitude permits the mind to feel;
Instructs, and prompts her to supply defects
By the division of her inward self
For grateful converse: and to these poor men
Nature (I but repeat your favourite boast)
Is bountiful—go wheresoe'er they may;
Kind nature's various wealth is all their own.
Versed in the characters of men; and bound,
By ties of daily interest, to maintain
Conciliatory manners and smooth speech;
Such have been, and still are in their degree,
Examples efficacious to refine
Rude intercourse; apt agents to expel,
By importation of unlooked-for arts,
Barbarian torpor, and blind prejudice;
Raising, through just gradation, savage life
To rustic, and the rustic to urbane.
—Within their moving magazines is lodged
Power that comes forth to quicken and exalt
Affections seated in the mother's breast,
And in the lover's fancy; and to feed
The sober sympathies of long-tried friends.
—By these Itinerants, as experienced men,
Counsel is given; contention they appease
With gentle language; in remotest wilds,
Tears wipe away, and pleasant tidings bring;
Could the proud quest of chivalry do more?"

"Happy," rejoined the Wanderer, "they who gain
A panegyric from your generous tongue!
But, if to these Wayfarers once pertained
Aught of romantic interest, it is gone.
Their purer service, in this realm at least,
Is past for ever.—An inventive Age
Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet
To most strange issues. I have lived to mark
A new and unforeseen creation rise
From out the labours of a peaceful Land
Wielding her potent enginery to frame
And to produce, with appetite as keen
As that of war, which rests not night or day,
Industrious to destroy! With fruitless pains
Might one like me *now* visit many a tract
Which, in his youth, he trod, and trod again,
A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,
Wished-for, or welcome, wheresoe'er he came—
Among the tenantry of thorpe and vill;
Or straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
And dignified by battlements and towers
Of some stern castle, mouldering on the brow
Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream.
The foot-path faintly marked, the horse-track wild,
And formidable length of plashy lane,
(Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
Or easier links connecting place with place)
Have vanished—swallowed up by stately roads
Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
Of Britain's farthest glens. The Earth has lent[1]
Her waters, Air her breezes; and the sail
Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,
Glistening along the low and woody dale;
Or, in its progress, on the lofty side,
Of some bare hill, with wonder kenned from far.

Meanwhile, at social Industry's command,
How quick, how vast an increase! From the germ

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[1] See Note.

Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
Here a huge town, continuous and compact,
Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and there,
Where not a habitation stood before,
Abodes of men irregularly massed
Like trees in forests,—spread through spacious tracts,
O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires
Hangs permanent, and plentiful as wreaths
Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.
And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his steps,
He sees the barren wilderness erased,
Or disappearing; triumph that proclaims
How much the mild Directress of the plough
Owes to alliance with these new-born arts!
—Hence is the wide sea peopled,—hence the shores
Of Britain are resorted to by ships
Freighted from every climate of the world
With the world's choicest produce. Hence that sum
Of keels that rest within her crowded ports,
Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays;
That animating spectacle of sails
That, through her inland regions, to and fro
Pass with the respirations of the tide,
Perpetual, multitudinous! Finally,
Hence a dread arm of floating power, a voice
Of thunder daunting those who would approach
With hostile purposes the blessèd Isle,
Truth's consecrated residence, the seat
Impregnable of Liberty and Peace.

And yet, O happy Pastor of a flock
Faithfully watched, and, by that loving care
And Heaven's good providence, preserved from taint!
With you I grieve, when on the darker side
Of this great change I look; and there behold
Such outrage done to nature as compels
The indignant power to justify herself;
Yea, to avenge her violated rights,
For England's bane.—When soothing darkness spreads
O'er hill and vale," the Wanderer thus expressed
His recollections, "and the punctual stars,
While all things else are gathering to their homes,
Advance, and in the firmament of heaven
Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturbed;
As if their silent company were charged
With peaceful admonitions for the heart
Of all-beholding Man, earth's thoughtful lord;
Then, in full many a region, once like this
The assured domain of calm simplicity
And pensive quiet, an unnatural light
Prepared for never-resting Labour's eyes
Breaks from a many-windowed fabric huge;
And at the appointed hour a bell is heard—
Of harsher import than the curfew-knoll
That spake the Norman Conqueror's stern behest—
A local summons to unceasing toil!
Disgorged are now the ministers of day;
And, as they issue from the illumined pile,
A fresh band meets them, at the crowded door—
And in the courts—and where the rumbling stream,
That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,
Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed
Among the rocks below. Men, maidens, youths,
Mother and little children, boys and girls,
Enter, and each the wonted task resumes
Within this temple, where is offered up
To Gain, the master idol of the realm,
Perpetual sacrifice. Even thus of old
Our ancestors, within the still domain
Of vast cathedral or conventual church,
Their vigils kept; where tapers day and might
On the dim altar burned continually,
In token that the House was evermore
Watching to God. Religious men were they;
Nor would their reason, tutored to aspire
Above this transitory world, allow
That there should pass a moment of the year,
When in their land the Almighty's service ceased.

Triumph who will in these profaner rites
Which we, a generation self-extolled,
As zealously perform! I cannot share
His proud complacency:—yet do I exult,
Casting reserve away, exult to see
An intellectual mastery exercised
O'er the blind elements; a purpose given,
A perseverance fed; almost a soul

Imparted—to brute matter. I rejoice,
Measuring the force of those gigantic powers
That, by the thinking mind, have been compelled
To serve the will of feeble-bodied Man.
For with the sense of admiration blends
The animating hope that time may come
When, strengthened, yet not dazzled, by the might
Of this dominion over nature gained,
Men of all lands shall exercise the same
In due proportion to their country's need;
Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thebes,
Tyre, by the margin of the sounding waves,
Palmyra, central in the desert, fell;
And the Arts died by which they had been raised.
—Call Archimedes from his buried tomb
Upon the grave of vanished Syracuse,
And feelingly the Sage shall make report
How insecure, how baseless in itself,
Is the Philosophy whose sway depends
On mere material instruments;—how weak
Those arts, and high inventions, if unpropped
By virtue.—He, sighing with pensive grief,
Amid his calm abstractions, would admit
That not the slender privilege is theirs
To save themselves from blank forgetfulness!"

When from the Wanderer's lips these words had fallen,
I said, "And, did in truth those vaunted Arts
Possess such privilege, how could we escape
Sadness and keen regret, we who revere,
And would preserve as things above all price,
The old domestic morals of the land,
Her simple manners, and the stable worth
That dignified and cheered a low estate?
Oh! where is now the character of peace,
Sobriety, and order, and chaste love,
And honest dealing, and untainted speech,
And pure good-will, and hospitable cheer;
That made the very thought of country-life
A thought of refuge, for a mind detained
Reluctantly amid the bustling crowd?
Where now the beauty of the sabbath kept
With conscientious reverence, as a day
By the almighty Lawgiver pronounced
Holy and blest? and where the winning grace
Of all the lighter ornaments attached
To time and season, as the year rolled round?"

"Fled!" was the Wanderer's passionate response,
"Fled utterly! or only to be traced
In a few fortunate retreats like this;
Which I behold with trembling, when I think
What lamentable change, a year—a month—
May bring; that brook converting as it runs
Into an instrument of deadly bane
For those, who, yet untempted to forsake
The simple occupations of their sires,
Drink the pure water of its innocent stream
With lip almost as pure.—Domestic bliss
(Or call it comfort, by a humbler name,)
How art thou blighted for the poor Man's heart!
Lo! in such neighbourhood, from morn to eve,
The habitations empty! or perchance
The Mother left alone,—no helping hand
To rock the cradle of her peevish babe;
No daughters round her, busy at the wheel,
Or in dispatch of each day's little growth
Of household occupation; no nice arts
Of needle-work; no bustle at the fire,
Where once the dinner was prepared with pride;
Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the mind;
Nothing to praise to teach, or to command!

The Father, if perchance he still retain
His old employments, goes to field or wood,
No longer led or followed by the Sons;
Idlers perchance they were,—but in *his* sight;
Breathing fresh air, and treading the green earth:
'Till their short holiday of childhood ceased,
Ne'er to return! That birthright now is lost.
Economists will tell you that the State

Thrives by the forfeiture—unfeeling thought,
And false as monstrous! Can the mother thrive
By the destruction of her innocent sons
In whom a premature necessity
Blocks out the forms of nature, preconsumes
The reason, famishes the heart, shuts up
The infant Being in itself, and makes
Its very spring a season of decay!
The lot is wretched, the condition sad,
Whether a pining discontent survive,
And thirst for change; or habit hath subdued
The soul deprest, dejected—even to love
Of her close tasks, and long captivity.

Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemns
A native Briton to these inward chains,
Fixed in his soul, so early and so deep;
Without his own consent, or knowledge, fixed!
He is a slave to whom release comes not,
And cannot come. The boy, where'er he turns,
Is still a prisoner; when the wind is up
Among the clouds, and roars through the ancient woods;
Or when the sun is shining in the east,
Quiet and calm. Behold him—in the school
Of his attainments? no; but with the air
Fanning his temples under heaven's blue arch.
His raiment, whitened o'er with cotton-flakes
Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes.
Creeping his gait and cowering, his lip pale,
His respiration quick and audible;
And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
Could break from out those languid eyes, or a blush
Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form,
Is that the countenance, and such the port,
Of no mean Being? One who should be clothed
With dignity befitting his proud hope;
Who, in his very childhood, should appear
Sublime from present purity and joy!
The limbs increase; but liberty of mind
Is gone for ever; and this organic frame,
So joyful in its motions, is become
Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
Through the whole body, with a languid will
Performs its functions; rarely competent
To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
The gentle visitations of the sun,
Or lapse of liquid element—by hand,
Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth—perceived.
—Can hope look forward to a manhood raised
On such foundations?"
"Hope is none for him!"
The pale Recluse indignantly exclaimed,
"And tens of thousands suffer wrong as deep.
Yet be it asked, in justice to our age,
If there were not, before those arts appeared,
These structures rose, commingling old and young,
And unripe sex with sex, for mutual taint;
If there were not, *then*, in our far-famed Isle,
Multitudes, who from infancy had breathed
Air unimprisoned, and had lived at large;
Yet walked beneath the sun, in human shape,
As abject, as degraded? At this day,
Who shall enumerate the crazy huts
And tottering hovels, whence do issue forth
A ragged Offspring, with their upright hair
Crowned like the image of fantastic Fear;
Or wearing, (shall we say?) in that white growth
An ill-adjusted turban, for defence
Or fierceness, wreathed around their sunburnt brows,
By savage Nature? Shrivelled are their lips,
Naked, and coloured like the soil, the feet
On which they stand; as if thereby they drew
Some nourishment, as trees do by their roots,
From earth, the common mother of us all.
Figure and mien, complexion and attire,
Are leagued to strike dismay; but outstretched hand
And whining voice denote them supplicants
For the least boon that pity can bestow.
Such on the breast of darksome heaths are found;

And with their parents occupy the skirts
Of furze-clad commons; such are born and reared
At the mine's mouth under impending rocks;
Or dwell in chambers of some natural cave;
Or where their ancestors erected huts,
For the convenience of unlawful gain,
In forest purlieus; and the like are bred,
All England through, where nooks and slips of ground
Purloined, in times less jealous than our own,
From the green margin of the public way,
A residence afford them, 'mid the bloom
And gaiety of cultivated fields.
Such (we will hope the lowest in the scale)
Do I remember oft-times to have seen
'Mid Buxton's dreary heights. In earnest watch,
Till the swift vehicle approach, they stand;
Then, following closely with the cloud of dust,
An uncouth feat exhibit, and are gone
Heels over head, like tumblers on a stage.
—Up from the ground they snatch the copper coin,
And, on the freight of merry passengers
Fixing a steady eye, maintain their speed;
And spin—and pant—and overhead again,
Wild pursuivants! until their breath is lost,
Or bounty tires—and every face, that smiled
Encouragement, hath ceased to look that way.
—But, like the vagrants of the gipsy tribe,
These, bred to little pleasure in themselves,
Are profitless to others.
Turn we then
To Britons born and bred within the pale
Of civil polity, and early trained
To earn, by wholesome labour in the field,
The bread they eat. A sample should I give
Of what this stock hath long produced to enrich
The tender age of life, ye would exclaim,
'Is this the whistling plough-boy whose shrill notes
Impart new gladness to the morning air!'
Forgive me if I venture to suspect
That many, sweet to hear of in soft verse,
Are of no finer frame. Stiff are his joints;
Beneath a cumbrous frock, that to the knees
Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,
Fellows to those that lustily upheld
The wooden stools for everlasting use,
Whereon our fathers sate. And mark his brow
Under whose shaggy canopy are set
Two eyes—not dim, but of a healthy stare—
Wide, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and strange—
Proclaiming boldly that they never drew
A look or motion of intelligence
From infant-conning of the Christ-cross-row,
Or puzzling through a primer, line by line,
Till perfect mastery crown the pains at last.
—What kindly warmth from touch of fostering hand,
What penetrating power of sun or breeze,
Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice?
This torpor is no pitiable work
Of modern ingenuity; no town
Nor crowded city can be taxed with aught
Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
To which (and who can tell where or how soon?)
He may be roused. This Boy the fields produce:
His spade and hoe, mattock and glittering scythe,
The carter's whip that on his shoulder rests
In air high-towering with a boorish pomp,
The sceptre of his sway; his country's name,
Her equal rights, her churches and her schools—
What have they done for him? And, let me ask,
For tens of thousands uninformed as he?
In brief, what liberty of *mind* is here?"

This ardent sally pleased the mild good Man,
To whom the appeal couched in its closing words
Was pointedly addressed; and to the thoughts
That, in assent or opposition, rose
Within his mind, he seemed prepared to give
Prompt utterance; but the Vicar interposed
With invitation urgently renewed.
—We followed, taking as he led, a path
Along a hedge of hollies dark and tall,

Whose flexile boughs low bending with a weight
Of leafy spray, concealed the stems and roots
That gave them nourishment. When frosty winds
Howl from the north, what kindly warmth, methought,
Is here—how grateful this impervious screen!
—Not shaped by simple wearing of the foot
On rural business passing to and fro
Was the commodious walk: a careful hand
Had marked the line, and strewn its surface o'er
With pure cerulean gravel, from the heights
Fetched by a neighbouring brook.—Across the vale
The stately fence accompanied our steps;
And thus the pathway, by perennial green
Guarded and graced, seemed fashioned to unite,
As by a beautiful yet solemn chain,
The Pastor's mansion with the house of prayer.

Like image of solemnity, conjoined
With feminine allurement soft and fair,
The mansion's self displayed;—a reverend pile
With bold projections and recesses deep;
Shadowy, yet gay and lightsome as it stood
Fronting the noontide sun. We paused to admire
The pillared porch, elaborately embossed;
The low wide windows with their mullions old;
The cornice, richly fretted, of grey stone;
And that smooth slope from which the dwelling rose,
By beds and banks Arcadian of gay flowers
And flowering shrubs, protected and adorned:
Profusion bright! and every flower assuming
A more than natural vividness of hue,
From unaffected contrast with the gloom
Of sober cypress, and the darker foil
Of yew, in which survived some traces, here
Not unbecoming, of grotesque device
And uncouth fancy. From behind the roof
Rose the slim ash and massy sycamore,
Blending their diverse foliage with the green
Of ivy, flourishing and thick, that clasped
The huge round chimneys, harbour of delight
For wren and redbreast,—where they sit and sing
Their slender ditties when the trees are bare.
Nor must I leave untouched (the picture else
Were incomplete) a relique of old times
Happily spared, a little Gothic niche
Of nicest workmanship; that once had held
The sculptured image of some patron-saint,
Or of the blessed Virgin, looking down
On all who entered those religious doors.

But lo! where from the rocky garden-mount
Crowned by its antique summer-house—descends,
Light as the silver fawn, a radiant Girl;
For she hath recognised her honoured friend,
The Wanderer ever welcome! A prompt kiss
The gladsome Child bestows at his request;
And, up the flowery lawn as we advance,
Hangs on the old Man with a happy look,
And with a pretty restless hand of love.
—We enter—by the Lady of the place
Cordially greeted. Graceful was her port:
A lofty stature undepressed by time,
Whose visitation had not wholly spared
The finer lineaments of form and face;
To that complexion brought which prudence trusts in
And wisdom loves.—But when a stately ship
Sails in smooth weather by the placid coast
On homeward voyage, what—if wind and wave,
And hardship undergone in various climes,
Have caused her to abate the virgin pride,
And that full trim of inexperienced hope
With which she left her haven—not for this,
Should the sun strike her, and the impartial breeze
Play on her streamers, fails she to assume
Brightness and touching beauty of her own,
That charm all eyes. So bright, so fair, appeared
This goodly Matron, shining in the beams
Of unexpected pleasure.—Soon the board
Was spread, and we partook a plain repast.

Here, resting in cool shelter, we beguiled
The mid-day hours with desultory talk;
From trivial themes to general argument

Passing, as accident or fancy led,
Or courtesy prescribed. While question rose
And answer flowed, the fetters of reserve
Dropping from every mind, the Solitary
Resumed the manners of his happier days;
And in the various conversation bore
A willing, nay, at times, a forward part;
Yet with the grace of one who in the world
Had learned the art of pleasing, and had now
Occasion given him to display his skill,
Upon the stedfast 'vantage-ground of truth.
He gazed, with admiration unsuppressed,
Upon the landscape of the sun-bright vale,
Seen, from the shady room in which we sate,
In softened perspective; and more than once
Praised the consummate harmony serene
Of gravity and elegance, diffused
Around the mansion and its whole domain;
Not, doubtless, without help of female taste
And female care.—"A blessed lot is yours!"
The words escaped his lip, with a tender sigh
Breathed over them: but suddenly the door
Flew open, and a pair of lusty Boys
Appeared, confusion checking their delight.
—Not brothers they in feature or attire,
But fond companions, so I guessed, in field,
And by the river's margin—whence they come,
Keen anglers with unusual spoil elated.
One bears a willow-pannier on his back,
The boy of plainer garb, whose blush survives
More deeply tinged. Twin might the other be
To that fair girl who from the garden-mount
Bounded:—triumphant entry this for him!
Between his hands he holds a smooth blue stone,
On whose capacious surface see outspread
Large store of gleaming crimson-spotted trouts;
Ranged side by side, and lessening by degrees
Up to the dwarf that tops the pinnacle.
Upon the board he lays the sky-blue stone
With its rich freight; their number he proclaims;
Tells from what pool the noblest had been dragged;
And where the very monarch of the brook,
After long struggle, had escaped at last—
Stealing alternately at them and us
(As doth his comrade too) a look of pride:
And, verily, the silent creatures made
A splendid sight, together thus exposed;
Dead—but not sullied or deformed by death,
That seemed to pity what he could not spare.

But oh, the animation in the mien
Of those two boys! yea in the very words
With which the young narrator was inspired,
When, as our questions led, he told at large
Of that day's prowess! Him might I compare,
His looks, tones, gestures, eager eloquence,
To a bold brook that splits for better speed,
And at the self-same moment, works its way
Through many channels, ever and anon
Parted and re-united: his compeer
To the still lake, whose stillness is to sight
As beautiful—as grateful to the mind.
—But to what object shall the lovely Girl
Be likened? She whose countenance and air
Unite the graceful qualities of both,
Even as she shares the pride and joy of both.

My grey-haired Friend was moved; his vivid eye
Glistened with tenderness; his mind, I knew,
Was full; and had, I doubted not, returned,
Upon this impulse, to the theme—erewhile
Abruptly broken off. The ruddy boys
Withdrew, on summons to their well-earned meal;
And He—to whom all tongues resigned their rights
With willingness, to whom the general ear
Listened with readier patience than to strain
Of music, lute or harp, a long delight
That ceased not when his voice had ceased—as One
Who from truth's central point serenely views
The compass of his argument—began
Mildly, and with a clear and steady tone.

BOOK NINTH

DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER, AND AN EVENING VISIT TO THE LAKE

ARGUMENT

Wanderer asserts that an active principle pervades the Universe, its noblest seat the human soul—How lively this principle is in Childhood—Hence the delight in old Age of looking back upon Childhood—The dignity, powers, and privileges of Age asserted—These not to be looked for generally but under a just government—Right of a human Creature to be exempt from being considered as a mere Instrument—The condition of multitudes deplored—Former conversation recurred to, and the Wanderer's opinions set in a clearer light—Truth placed within reach of the humblest—Equality—Happy state of the two Boys again adverted to—Earnest wish expressed for a System of National Education established universally by Government—Glorious effects of this foretold—Walk to the Lake—Grand spectacle from the side of a hill—Address of Priest to the Supreme Being—In the course of which he contrasts with ancient Barbarism the present appearance of the scene before him—The change ascribed to Christianity—Apostrophe to his flock, living and dead—Gratitude to the Almighty—Return over the Lake—Parting with the Solitary—Under what circumstances.

"To every Form of being is assigned,"
Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
"An *active* Principle:—howe'er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists
In all things, in all natures; in the stars
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
The moving waters, and the invisible air.
Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
Beyond itself, communicating good,
A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.
This is the freedom of the universe;
Unfolded still the more, more visible,
The more we know; and yet is reverenced least,
And least respected in the human Mind,
Its most apparent home. The food of hope
Is meditated action; robbed of this
Her sole support, she languishes and dies.
We perish also; for we live by hope
And by desire; we see by the glad light
And breathe the sweet air of futurity;
And so we live, or else we have no life.
To-morrow—nay perchance this very hour
(For every moment hath its own to-morrow!)
Those blooming Boys, whose hearts are almost sick
With present triumph, will be sure to find
A field before them freshened with the dew
Of other expectations;—in which course
Their happy year spins round. The youth obeys
A like glad impulse; and so moves the man
'Mid all his apprehensions, cares, and fears,—
Or so he ought to move. Ah! why in age
Do we revert so fondly to the walks
Of childhood—but that there the Soul discerns
The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
Of her own native vigour; thence can hear
Reverberations; and a choral song,
Commingling with the incense that ascends,
Undaunted, toward the imperishable heavens,
From her own lonely altar?
Do not think
That good and wise ever will be allowed,
Though strength decay, to breathe in such estate
As shall divide them wholly from the stir
Of hopeful nature. Rightly is it said
That Man descends into the VALE of years;
Yet have I thought that we might also speak,
And not presumptuously, I trust, of Age,
As of a final EMINENCE; though bare
In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
On which 'tis not impossible to sit
In awful sovereignty; a place of power,
A throne, that may be likened unto his,
Who, in some placid day of summer, looks
Down from a mountain-top,—say one of those
High peaks, that bound the vale where now we are.
Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye,
Forest and field, and hill and dale appear,

With all the shapes over their surface spread:
But, while the gross and visible frame of things
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea almost on the Mind herself, and seems
All unsubstantialized,—how loud the voice
Of waters, with invigorated peal
From the full river in the vale below,
Ascending! For on that superior height
Who sits, is disencumbered from the press
Of near obstructions, and is privileged
To breathe in solitude, above the host
Of ever-humming insects, 'mid thin air
That suits not them. The murmur of the leaves
Many and idle, visits not his ear:
This he is freed from, and from thousand notes
(Not less unceasing, not less vain than these,)
By which the finer passages of sense
Are occupied; and the Soul, that would incline
To listen, is prevented or deterred.

And may it not be hoped, that, placed by age
In like removal, tranquil though severe,
We are not so removed for utter loss;
But for some favour, suited to our need?
What more than that the severing should confer
Fresh power to commune with the invisible world,
And hear the mighty stream of tendency
Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
A clear sonorous voice, inaudible
To the vast multitude; whose doom it is
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labour on the Plain below.

But, if to such sublime ascent the hopes
Of Man may rise, as to a welcome close
And termination of his mortal course;
Them only can such hope inspire whose minds
Have not been starved by absolute neglect;
Nor bodies crushed by unremitting toil;
To whom kind Nature, therefore, may afford
Proof of the sacred love she bears for all;
Whose birthright Reason, therefore, may ensure.
For me, consulting what I feel within
In times when most existence with herself
Is satisfied, I cannot but believe,
That, far as kindly Nature hath free scope
And Reason's sway predominates; even so far,
Country, society, and time itself,
That saps the individual's bodily frame,
And lays the generations low in dust,
Do, by the almighty Ruler's grace, partake
Of one maternal spirit, bringing forth
And cherishing with ever-constant love,
That tires not, nor betrays. Our life is turned
Out of her course, wherever man is made
An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool
Or implement, a passive thing employed
As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
Of common right or interest in the end;
Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt.
Say, what can follow for a rational soul
Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
And strength in evil? Hence an after-call
For chastisement, and custody, and bonds,
And oft-times Death, avenger of the past,
And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare
Entrust the future.—Not for these sad issues
Was Man created; but to obey the law
Of life, and hope, and action. And 'tis known
That when we stand upon our native soil,
Unelbowed by such objects as oppress
Our active powers, those powers themselves become
Strong to subvert our noxious qualities:
They sweep distemper from the busy day,
And make the chalice of the big round year
Run o'er with gladness; whence the Being moves
In beauty through the world; and all who see
Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood."

"Then," said the Solitary, "by what force
Of language shall a feeling heart express
Her sorrow for that multitude in whom
We look for health from seeds that have been sown
In sickness, and for increase in a power
That works but by extinction? On themselves

They cannot lean, nor turn to their own hearts
To know what they must do; their wisdom is
To look into the eyes of others, thence
To be instructed what they must avoid:
Or rather, let us say, how least observed,
How with most quiet and most silent death,
With the least taint and injury to the air
The oppressor breathes, their human form divine,
And their immortal soul, may waste away."

The Sage rejoined, "I thank you—you have spared
My voice the utterance of a keen regret,
A wide compassion which with you I share.
When, heretofore, I placed before your sight
A Little-one, subjected to the arts
Of modern ingenuity, and made
The senseless member of a vast machine,
Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel;
Think not, that, pitying him, I could forget
The rustic Boy, who walks the fields, untaught;
The slave of ignorance, and oft of want,
And miserable hunger. Much, too much,
Of this unhappy lot, in early youth
We both have witnessed, lot which I myself
Shared, though in mild and merciful degree:
Yet was the mind to hindrances exposed,
Through which I struggled, not without distress
And sometimes injury, like a lamb enthralled
'Mid thorns and brambles; or a bird that breaks
Through a strong net, and mounts upon the wind,
Though with her plumes impaired. If they, whose souls
Should open while they range the richer fields
Of merry England, are obstructed less
By indigence, their ignorance is not less,
Nor less to be deplored. For who can doubt
That tens of thousands at this day exist
Such as the boy you painted, lineal heirs
Of those who once were vassals of her soil,
Following its fortunes like the beasts or trees
Which it sustained. But no one takes delight
In this oppression; none are proud of it;
It bears no sounding name, nor ever bore;
A standing grievance, an indigenous vice
Of every country under heaven. My thoughts
Were turned to evils that are new and chosen,
A bondage lurking under shape of good,—
Arts, in themselves beneficent and kind,
But all too fondly followed and too far;—
To victims, which the merciful can see
Nor think that they are victims—turned to wrongs,
By women, who have children of their own,
Beheld without compassion, yea with praise!
I spake of mischief by the wise diffused
With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads
The healthier, the securer, we become;
Delusion which a moment may destroy!
Lastly, I mourned for those whom I had seen
Corrupted and cast down, on favoured ground,
Where circumstance and nature had combined
To shelter innocence, and cherish love;
Who, but for this intrusion, would have lived,
Possessed of health, and strength, and peace of mind;
Thus would have lived, or never have been born.

Alas! what differs more than man from man!
And whence that difference? whence but from himself?
For see the universal Race endowed
With the same upright form!—The sun is fixed,
And the infinite magnificence of heaven
Fixed, within reach of every human eye;
The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears;
The vernal field infuses fresh delight
Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense,
Even as an object is sublime or fair,
That object is laid open to the view
Without reserve or veil; and as a power
Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
Are each and all enabled to perceive
That power, that influence, by impartial law.

Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all;
Reason, and, with that reason, smiles and tears;
Imagination, freedom in the will;
Conscience to guide and check; and death to be
Foretasted, immortality conceived
By all,—a blissful immortality,
To them whose holiness on earth shall make
The Spirit capable of heaven, assured.
Strange, then, nor less than monstrous, might be deemed
The failure, if the Almighty, to this point
Liberal and undistinguishing, should hide
The excellence of moral qualities
From common understanding; leaving truth
And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark;
Hard to be won, and only by a few;
Strange, should He deal herein with nice respects,
And frustrate all the rest! Believe it not:
The primal duties shine aloft—like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts—
No mystery is here! Here is no boon
For high—yet not for low; for proudly graced—
Yet not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
As from the haughtiest palace. He, whose soul
Ponders this true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and hope;
Yet, in that meditation, will he find
Motive to sadder grief, as we have found;
Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,
And for the injustice grieving, that hath made
So wide a difference between man and man.

Then let us rather fix our gladdened thoughts
Upon the brighter scene. How blest that pair
Of blooming Boys (whom we beheld even now)
Blest in their several and their common lot!
A few short hours of each returning day
The thriving prisoners of their village school:
And thence let loose, to seek their pleasant homes
Or range the grassy lawn in vacancy:
To breathe and to be happy, run and shout
Idle,—but no delay, no harm, no loss;
For every genial power of heaven and earth,
Through all the seasons of the changeful year,
Obsequiously doth take upon herself
To labour for them; bringing each in turn
The tribute of enjoyment, knowledge, health,
Beauty, or strength! Such privilege is theirs,
Granted alike in the outset of their course
To both; and, if that partnership must cease,
I grieve not," to the Pastor here he turned,
"Much as I glory in that child of yours,
Repine not for his cottage-comrade, whom
Belike no higher destiny awaits
Than the old hereditary wish fulfilled;
The wish for liberty to live—content
With what Heaven grants, and die—in peace of mind,
Within the bosom of his native vale.
At least, whatever fate the noon of life
Reserves for either, sure it is that both
Have been permitted to enjoy the dawn;
Whether regarded as a jocund time,
That in itself may terminate, or lead
In course of nature to a sober eve.
Both have been fairly dealt with; looking back
They will allow that justice has in them
Been shown, alike to body and to mind."

He paused, as if revolving in his soul
Some weighty matter; then, with fervent voice
And an impassioned majesty, exclaimed—

"O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial Realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself by statute[1] to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains

[1] See Note.

The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth,
Both understood and practised,—so that none,
However destitute, be left to droop
By timely culture unsustained; or run
Into a wild disorder; or be forced
To drudge through a weary life without the help
Of intellectual implements and tools;
A savage horde among the civilised,
A servile band among the lordly free!
This sacred right, the lisping babe proclaims
To be inherent in him, by Heaven's will,
For the protection of his innocence;
And the rude boy—who, having overpast
The sinless age, by conscience is enrolled,
Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,
And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,
Or turns the godlike faculty of speech
To impious use—by process indirect
Declares his due, while he makes known his need.
—This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,
This universal plea in vain addressed,
To eyes and ears of parents who themselves
Did, in the time of their necessity,
Urge it in vain; and, therefore, like a prayer
That from the humblest floor ascends to heaven,
It mounts to meet the State's parental ear;
Who, if indeed she own a mother's heart,
And be not most unfeelingly devoid
Of gratitude to Providence, will grant
The unquestionable good—which, England, safe
From interference of external force,
May grant at leisure; without risk incurred
That what in wisdom for herself she doth,
Others shall e'er be able to undo.

Look! and behold, from Calpe's sunburnt cliffs
To the flat margin of the Baltic sea,
Long-reverenced titles cast away as weeds;
Laws overturned; and territory split,
Like fields of ice rent by the polar wind,
And forced to join in less obnoxious shapes
Which, ere they gain consistence, by a gust
Of the same breath are shattered and destroyed.
Meantime the sovereignty of these fair Isles
Remains entire and indivisible:
And, if that ignorance were removed, which breeds
Within the compass of their several shores
Dark discontent, or loud commotion, each
Might still preserve the beautiful repose
Of heavenly bodies shining in their spheres.
—The discipline of slavery is unknown
Among us,—hence the more do we require
The discipline of virtue; order else
Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
Thus, duties rising out of good possest,
And prudent caution needful to avert
Impending evil, equally require
That the whole people should be taught and trained.
So shall licentiousness and black resolve
Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take
Their place; and genuine piety descend,
Like an inheritance, from age to age.

With such foundations laid, avaunt the fear
Of numbers crowded on their native soil,
To the prevention of all healthful growth
Through mutual injury! Rather in the law
Of increase and the mandate from above
Rejoice!—and ye have special cause for joy.
—For, as the element of air affords
An easy passage to the industrious bees
Fraught with their burthens; and a way as smooth
For those ordained to take their sounding flight
From the thronged hive, and settle where they list
In fresh abodes—their labour to renew;
So the wide waters, open to the power,
The will, the instincts, and appointed needs
Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
Her swarms, and in succession send them forth;
Bound to establish new communities
On every shore whose aspect favours hope
Or bold adventure; promising to skill
And perseverance their deserved reward.

Yes," he continued, kindling as he spake,
"Change wide, and deep, and silently performed,
This Land shall witness; and as days roll on,
Earth's universal frame shall feel the effect;

Even till the smallest habitable rock,
Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
Of humanised society; and bloom
With civil arts, that shall breathe forth their fragrance,
A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven.
From culture, unexclusively bestowed
On Albion's noble Race in freedom born,
Expect these mighty issues: from the pains
And faithful care of unambitious schools
Instructing simple childhood's ready ear:
Thence look for these magnificent results!
—Vast the circumference of hope—and ye
Are at its centre, British Lawgivers;
Ah! sleep not there in shame! Shall Wisdom's voice
From out the bosom of these troubled times
Repeat the dictates of her calmer mind,
And shall the venerable halls ye fill
Refuse to echo the sublime decree?
Trust not to partial care a general good;
Transfer not to futurity a work
Of urgent need.—Your Country must complete
Her glorious destiny. Begin even now,
Now, when oppression, like the Egyptian plague
Of darkness, stretched o'er guilty Europe, makes
The brightness more conspicuous that invests
The happy Island where ye think and act;
Now, when destruction is a prime pursuit,
Show to the wretched nations for what end
The powers of civil polity were given."

Abruptly here, but with a graceful air,
The Sage broke off. No sooner had he ceased
Than, looking forth, the gentle Lady said,
"Behold the shades of afternoon have fallen
Upon this flowery slope; and see—beyond—
The silvery lake is streaked with placid blue;
As if preparing for the peace of evening.
How temptingly the landscape shines! The air
Breathes invitation; easy is the walk
To the lake's margin, where a boat lies moored
Under a sheltering tree."—Upon this hint
We rose together; all were pleased; but most
The beauteous girl, whose cheek was flushed with joy.
Light as a sunbeam glides along the hills
She vanished—eager to impart the scheme
To her loved brother and his shy compeer.
—Now was there bustle in the Vicar's house
And earnest preparation.—Forth we went,
And down the vale along the streamlet's edge
Pursued our way, a broken company,
Mute or conversing, single or in pairs.
Thus having reached a bridge, that over-arched
The hasty rivulet where it lay becalmed
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A twofold image; on a grassy bank
A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same! Most beautiful,
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathèd horns superb,
The breathing creature stood; as beautiful,
Beneath him, showed his shadowy counterpart.
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seemed centre of his own fair world:
Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several spheres,
Blended in perfect stillness, to our sight!

"Ah! what a pity were it to disperse,
Or to disturb, so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it!"
These few words
The Lady whispered, while we stood and gazed
Gathered together, all in still delight,
Not without awe. Thence passing on, she said
In like low voice to my particular ear,
"I love to hear that eloquent old Man
Pour forth his meditations, and descant
On human life from infancy to age.
How pure his spirit! in what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms of things,
Caught in their fairest, happiest, attitude!
While he is speaking, I have power to see
Even as he sees; but when his voice hath ceased,
Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel, as now,

That combinations so serene and bright
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
Whose highest beauty, beautiful as it is,
Like that reflected in yon quiet pool,
Seems but a fleeting sunbeam's gift, whose peace,
The sufferance only of a breath of air!"

More had she said—but sportive shouts were heard
Sent from the jocund hearts of those two Boys,
Who, bearing each a basket on his arm,
Down the green field came tripping after us.
With caution we embarked; and now the pair
For prouder service were addrest; but each,
Wishful to leave an opening for my choice,
Dropped the light oar his eager hand had seized.
Thanks given for that becoming courtesy,
Their place I took—and for a grateful office
Pregnant with recollections of the time
When, on thy bosom, spacious Windermere!
A Youth, I practised this delightful art;
Tossed on the waves alone, or 'mid a crew
Of joyous comrades. Soon as the reedy marge
Was cleared, I dipped, with arms accordant, oars
Free from obstruction; and the boat advanced
Through crystal water, smoothly as a hawk,
That, disentangled from the shady boughs
Of some thick wood, her place of covert, cleaves
With correspondent wings the abyss of air.
—"Observe," the Vicar said, "yon rocky isle
With birch-trees fringed; my hand shall guide the helm,
While thitherward we shape our course; or while
We seek that other, on the western shore;
Where the bare columns of those lofty firs,
Supporting gracefully a massy dome
Of sombre foliage, seem to imitate
A Grecian temple rising from the Deep."

"Turn where we may," said I, "we cannot err
In this delicious region."—Cultured slopes,
Wild tracts of forest-ground, and scattered groves,
And mountains bare, or clothed with ancient woods,
Surrounded us; and, as we held our way
Along the level of the glassy flood,
They ceased not to surround us; change of place
From kindred features diversely combined,
Producing change of beauty ever new.
—Ah! that such beauty, varying in the light
Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill;
But is the property of him alone
Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
And in his mind recorded it with love!
Suffice it, therefore, if the rural Muse
Vouchsafe sweet influence, while her Poet speaks
Of trivial occupations well devised,
And unsought pleasures springing up by chance;
As if some friendly Genius had ordained
That, as the day thus far had been enriched
By acquisition of sincere delight,
The same should be continued to its close.

One spirit animating old and young,
A gipsy-fire we kindled on the shore
Of the fair Isle with birch-trees fringed—and there,
Merrily seated in a ring, partook
A choice repast—served by our young companions
With rival earnestness and kindred glee.
Launched from our hands the smooth stone skimmed the lake;
With shouts we raised the echoes:—stiller sounds
The lovely Girl supplied—a simple song,
Whose low tones reached not to the distant rocks
To be repeated thence, but gently sank
Into our hearts; and charmed the peaceful flood.
Rapaciously we gathered flowery spoils
From land and water; lilies of each hue—
Golden and white, that float upon the waves,
And court the wind; and leaves of that shy plant,

(Her flowers were shed) the lily of the vale,
That loves the ground, and from the sun withholds
Her pensive beauty; from the breeze her sweets.

Such product, and such pastime, did the place
And season yield; but, as we re-embarked,
Leaving, in quest of other scenes, the shore
Of that wild spot, the Solitary said
In a low voice, yet careless who might hear,
"The fire, that burned so brightly to our wish,
Where is it now?—Deserted on the beach—
Dying, or dead! Nor shall the fanning breeze
Revive its ashes. What care we for this,
Whose ends are gained? Behold an emblem here
Of one day's pleasure, and all mortal joys!
And, in this unpremeditated slight
Of that which is no longer needed, see
The common course of human gratitude!"

This plaintive note disturbed not the repose
Of the still evening. Right across the lake
Our pinnace moves; then, coasting creek and bay,
Glades we behold, and into thickets peep,
Where couch the spotted deer; or raised our eyes
To shaggy steeps on which the careless goat
Browsed by the side of dashing waterfalls;
And thus the bark, meandering with the shore,
Pursued her voyage, till a natural pier
Of jutting rock invited us to land.

Alert to follow as the Pastor led,
We clomb a green hill's side; and, as we clomb,
The Valley, opening out her bosom, gave
Fair prospect, intercepted less and less,
O'er the flat meadows and indented coast
Of the smooth lake, in compass seen:—far off,
And yet conspicuous, stood the old Church-tower,
In majesty presiding over fields
And habitations seemingly preserved
From all intrusion of the restless world
By rocks impassable and mountains huge.

Soft heath this elevated spot supplied,
And choice of moss-clad stones, whereon we couched
Or sate reclined; admiring quietly
The general aspect of the scene; but each
Not seldom over anxious to make known
His own discoveries; or to favourite points
Directing notice, merely from a wish
To impart a joy, imperfect while unshared.
That rapturous moment never shall I forget
When these particular interests were effaced
From every mind!—Already had the sun,
Sinking with less than ordinary state,
Attained his western bound; but rays of light—
Now suddenly diverging from the orb
Retired behind the mountain tops or veiled
By the dense air—shot upwards to the crown
Of the blue firmament—aloft, and wide:
And multitudes of little floating clouds,
Through their ethereal texture pierced—ere we,
Who saw, of change were conscious—had become
Vivid as fire; clouds separately poised,—
Innumerable multitude of forms
Scattered through half the circle of the sky;
And giving back, and shedding each on each,
With prodigal communion, the bright hues
Which from the unapparent fount of glory
They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
That which the heavens displayed, the liquid deep
Repeated; but with unity sublime!

While from the grassy mountain's open side
We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent
On the refulgent spectacle, diffused
Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space,
The Priest in holy transport thus exclaimed:
"Eternal Spirit! universal God!
Power inaccessible to human thought,
Save by degrees and steps which thou hast deigned
To furnish; for this effluence of thyself,
To the infirmity of mortal sense
Vouchsafed; this local transitory type
Of thy paternal splendours, and the pomp
Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
The radiant Cherubim;—accept the thanks

Which we, thy humble Creatures, here convened,
Presume to offer; we, who—from the breast
Of the frail earth, permitted to behold
The faint reflections only of thy face—
Are yet exalted, and in soul adore!
Such as they are who in thy presence stand
Unsullied, incorruptible, and drink
Imperishable majesty streamed forth
From thy empyreal throne, the elect of earth
Shall be—divested at the appointed hour
Of all dishonour, cleansed from mortal stain.
—Accomplish, then, their number; and conclude
Time's weary course! Or if, by thy decree,
The consummation that will come by stealth
Be yet far distant, let thy Word prevail,
Oh! let thy Word prevail, to take away
The sting of human nature. Spread the law,
As it is written in thy holy book,
Throughout all lands; let every nation hear
The high behest, and every heart obey;
Both for the love of purity, and hope
Which it affords, to such as do thy will
And persevere in good, that they shall rise,
To have a nearer view of thee, in heaven.
—Father of good! this prayer in bounty grant,
In mercy grant it, to thy wretched sons.
Then, not till then, shall persecution cease,
And cruel wars expire. The way is marked,
The guide appointed, and the ransom paid.
Alas! the nations, who of yore received
These tidings, and in Christian temples meet
The sacred truth to knowledge, linger still;
Preferring bonds and darkness to a state
Of holy freedom, by redeeming love
Proffered to all, while yet on earth detained.

So fare the many; and the thoughtful few,
Who in the anguish of their souls bewail
This dire perverseness, cannot choose but ask,
Shall it endure?—Shall enmity and strife,
Falsehood and guile, be left to sow their seed;
And the kind never perish? Is the hope
Fallacious, or shall righteousness obtain
A peaceable dominion, wide as earth,
And ne'er to fail? Shall that blest day arrive
When they, whose choice or lot it is to dwell
In crowded cities, without fear shall live
Studious of mutual benefit; and he,
Whom Morn awakens, among dews and flowers
Of every clime, to till the lonely field,
Be happy in himself?—The law of faith
Working through love, such conquest shall it gain,
Such triumph over sin and guilt achieve?
Almighty Lord, thy further grace impart!
And with that help the wonder shall be seen
Fulfilled, the hope accomplished; and thy praise
Be sung with transport and unceasing joy.

Once," and with mild demeanour, as he spake,
On us the venerable Pastor turned
His beaming eye that had been raised to Heaven,
"Once, while the Name, Jehovah, was a sound
Within the circuit of this sea-girt isle
Unheard, the savage nations bowed the head
To Gods delighting in remorseless deeds;
Gods which themselves had fashioned, to promote
Ill purposes, and flatter foul desires.
Then, in the bosom of yon mountain-cove,
To those inventions of corrupted man
Mysterious rites were solemnised; and there—
Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods—
Of those terrific Idols some received
Such dismal service, that the loudest voice
Of the swoln cataracts (which now are heard
Soft murmuring) was too weak to overcome,
Though aided by wild winds, the groans and shrieks
Of human victims, offered up to appease
Or to propitiate. And, if living eyes
Had visionary faculties to see
The thing that hath been as the thing that is,
Aghast we might behold this crystal Mere
Bedimmed with smoke, in wreaths voluminous,
Flung from the body of devouring fires,

To Taranis erected on the heights
By priestly hands, for sacrifice performed
Exultingly, in view of open day
And full assemblage of a barbarous host;
Or to Andates, female Power! who gave
(For so they fancied) glorious victory.
—A few rude monuments of mountain-stone
Survive; all else is swept away.—How bright
The appearances of things! From such, how changed
The existing worship; and with those compared,
The worshippers how innocent and blest!
So wide the difference, a willing mind
Might almost think, at this affecting hour,
That paradise, the lost abode of man,
Was raised again: and to a happy few,
In its original beauty, here restored.

Whence but from thee, the true and only God,
And from the faith derived through Him who bled
Upon the cross, this marvellous advance
Of good from evil; as if one extreme
Were left, the other gained.—O ye, who come
To kneel devoutly in yon reverend Pile,
Called to such office by the peaceful sound
Of sabbath bells; and ye, who sleep in earth,
All cares forgotten, round its hallowed walls!
For you, in presence of this little band
Gathered together on the green hill-side,
Your Pastor is emboldened to prefer
Vocal thanksgivings to the eternal King;
Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands, have made
Your very poorest rich in peace of thought
And in good works; and him, who is endowed
With scantiest knowledge, master of all truth
Which the salvation of his soul requires.
Conscious of that abundant favour showered
On you, the children of my humble care,
And this dear land, our country, while on earth
We sojourn, have I lifted up my soul,
Joy giving voice to fervent gratitude.
These barren rocks, your stern inheritance;
These fertile fields, that recompense your pains;
The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top;
Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,
Or hushed; the roaring waters and the still—
They see the offering of my lifted hands,
They hear my lips present their sacrifice,
They know if I be silent, morn or even:
For, though in whispers speaking, the full heart
Will find a vent; and thought is praise to him,
Audible praise, to thee, omniscient Mind,
From whom all gifts descend, all blessings flow!"

This vesper-service closed, without delay,
From that exalted station to the plain
Descending, we pursued our homeward course,
In mute composure, o'er the shadowy lake,
Under a faded sky. No trace remained
Of those celestial splendours; grey the vault—
Pure, cloudless, ether; and the star of eve
Was wanting; but inferior lights appeared
Faintly, too faint almost for sight; and some
Above the darkened hills stood boldly forth
In twinkling lustre, ere the boat attained
Her mooring-place; where, to the sheltering tree,
Our youthful Voyagers bound fast her prow,
With prompt yet careful hands. This done, we paced
The dewy fields; but ere the Vicar's door
Was reached, the Solitary checked his steps;
Then, intermingling thanks, on each bestowed
A farewell salutation; and, the like
Receiving, took the slender path that leads
To the one cottage in the lonely dell:
But turned not without welcome promise made
That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
Of yet another summer's day, not loth
To wander with us through the fertile vales,
And o'er the mountain-wastes. "Another sun,"
Said he, "shall shine upon us, ere we part;

Another sun, and peradventure more;
If time, with free consent, be yours to give,
And season favours."
To enfeebled Power,
From this communion with uninjured Minds,
What renovation had been brought; and what
Degree of healing to a wounded spirit,
Dejected, and habitually disposed
To seek, in degradation of the Kind,
Excuse and solace for her own defects;
How far those erring notions were reformed;
And whether aught, of tendency as good
And pure, from further intercourse ensued;
This—if delightful hopes, as heretofore,
Inspire the serious song, and gentle Hearts
Cherish, and lofty Minds approve the past—
My future labours may not leave untold.
1795-1814.

LAODAMIA

Written at Rydal Mount. The incident of the trees growing and withering put the subject into my thoughts, and I wrote with the hope of giving it a loftier tone than, so far as I know, has been given to it by any of the Ancients who have treated of it. It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written.

"WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required:
Celestial pity I again implore;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence? his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He!
And a God leads him, wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear; "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamía! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

"Protesiláus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on wil rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon; and blest a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamía! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect:—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain."

"Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest

By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou should'st elude the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

"No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—"

"Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

"But if thou goest, I follow—" "Peace!" he said,—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—"Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night;

"And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

"The wished-for wind was given:—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, belovèd Wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains, flowers
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

"But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
'Behold they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?'
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

"Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."——

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes reappears!
Round the dear Shade she would have clung—'tis vain:
The hours are past—too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse She lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,
By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight;
A constant interchange of growth and blight![1] 1814.

DION

(SEE PLUTARCH)

This poem was first introduced by a stanza that I have since transferred to the Notes, for reasons there given, and I cannot comply with the request expressed by some of my friends that the rejected stanza should be restored. I hope they will be content if it be, hereafter, immediately attached to the poem, instead of its being degraded to a place in the Notes.[2]

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[1] For the account of these long-lived trees, see Pliny's *Natural History*, lib. xvi. cap. 44; and for the features in the character of Protesilaus see the *Iphigenia in Aulis* of Euripides. Virgil places the Shade of Laodamia in a mournful region, among unhappy Lovers,

"—— His Laodamia,
It comes.——"

[2] See Note.

I

SERENE, and fitted to embrace,
Where'er he turned, a swan-like grace
Of haughtiness without pretence,
And to unfold a still magnificence,
Was princely Dion, in the power
And beauty of his happier hour.
And what pure homage *then* did wait
On Dion's virtues, while the lunar beam
Of Plato's genius, from its lofty sphere,
Fell round him in the grove of Academe,
Softening their inbred dignity austere—
That he, not too elate
With self-sufficing solitude,
But with majestic lowliness endued,
Might in the universal bosom reign,
And from affectionate observance gain
Help, under every change of adverse fate.

II

Five thousand warriors—O the rapturous day!
Each crowned with flowers, and armed with spear and shield,
Or ruder weapon which their course might yield,
To Syracuse advance in bright array.
Who leads them on?—The anxious people see
Long-exiled Dion marching at their head,
He also crowned with flowers of Sicily,
And in a white, far-beaming, corselet clad!
Pure transport undisturbed by doubt or fear
The gazers feel; and, rushing to the plain,
Salute those strangers as a holy train
Or blest procession (to the Immortals dear)
That brought their precious liberty again.
Lo! when the gates are entered, on each hand,
Down the long street, rich goblets filled with wine
In seemly order stand,
On tables set, as if for rites divine;—
And, as the great Deliverer marches by,
He looks on festal ground with fruits bestrown;
And flowers are on his person thrown
In boundless prodigality;
Nor doth the general voice abstain from prayer,
Invoking Dion's tutelary care,
As if a very Deity he were!

III

Mourn, hills and groves of Attica! and mourn
Ilissus, bending o'er thy classic urn!
Mourn, and lament for him whose spirit dreads
Your once sweet memory, studious walks and shades!
For him who to divinity aspired,
Not on the breath of popular applause,
But through dependence on the sacred laws
Framed in the schools where Wisdom dwelt retired,
Intent to trace the ideal path of right
(More fair than heaven's broad causeway paved with stars)
Which Dion learned to measure with sublime delight;—
But He hath overleaped the eternal bars;
And, following guides whose craft holds no consent
With aught that breathes the ethereal element,
Hath stained the robes of civil power with blood,
Unjustly shed, though for the public good.
Whence doubts that came too late, and wishes vain,
Hollow excuses, and triumphant pain;
And oft his cogitations sink as low
As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
The heaviest plummet of despair can go—
But whence that sudden check? that fearful start!
He hears an uncouth sound—
Anon his lifted eyes
Saw, at a long-drawn gallery's dusky bound,
A Shape of more than mortal size
And hideous aspect, stalking round and round!
A woman's garb the Phantom wore,
And fiercely swept the marble floor,—
Like Auster whirling to and fro,
His force on Caspian foam to try;
Or Boreas when he scours the snow
That skins the plains of Thessaly,
Or when aloft on Mænalus he stops
His flight, 'mid eddying pine-tree tops!

IV

So, but from toil less sign of profit reaping,
The sullen Spectre to her purpose bowed,
Sweeping—vehemently sweeping—

No pause admitted, no design avowed!
"Avaunt, inexplicable Guest!—avaunt,"
Exclaimed the Chieftain—"let me rather see
The coronal that coiling vipers make;
The torch that flames with many a lurid flake,
And the long train of doleful pageantry
Which they behold, whom vengeful Furies haunt;
Who, while they struggle from the scourge to flee,
Move where the blasted soil is not unworn,
And, in their anguish, bear what other minds have borne!"

V

But Shapes that come not at an earthly call,
Will not depart when mortal voices bid;
Lords of the visionary eye whose lid,
Once raised, remains aghast, and will not fall!
Ye Gods, thought He, that servile Implement
Obeys a mystical intent!
Your Minister would brush away
The spots that to my soul adhere;
But should she labour night and day,
They will not, cannot disappear;
Whence angry perturbations,—and that look
Which no Philosophy can brook!

VI

Ill-fated Chief! there are whose hopes are built
Upon the ruins of thy glorious name;
Who, through the portal of one moment's guilt,
Pursue thee with their deadly aim!
O matchless perfidy! portentous lust
Of monstrous crime!—that horror-striking blade,
Drawn in defiance of the Gods, hath laid
The noble Syracusan low in dust!
Shuddered the walls—the marble city wept—
And sylvan places heaved a pensive sigh;
But in calm peace the appointed Victim slept,
As he had fallen in magnanimity;
Of spirit too capacious to require
That Destiny her course should change; too just
To his own native greatness to desire
That wretched boon, days lengthened by mistrust.
So were the hopeless troubles, that involved
The soul of Dion, instantly dissolved.
Released from life and cares of princely state,
He left this moral grafted on his Fate;
"Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends,
Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends."

1814.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND

1814

In this tour, my wife and her sister Sara were my companions. The account of the "Brownie's Cell" and the Brownies was given me by a man we met with on the banks of Loch Lomond, a little above Tarbert, and in front of a huge mass of rock, by the side of which, we were told, preachings were often held in the open air. The place is quite a solitude, and the surrounding scenery very striking. How much is it to be regretted that, instead of writing such Poems as the "Holy Fair" and others, in which the religious observances of his country are treated with so much levity and too often with indecency, Burns had not employed his genius in describing religion under the serious and affecting aspects it must so frequently take.

I

SUGGESTED BY A BEAUTIFUL RUIN UPON ONE OF THE ISLANDS OF LOCH LOMOND, A PLACE CHOSEN FOR THE RETREAT OF A SOLITARY INDIVIDUAL, FROM WHOM THIS HABITATION ACQUIRED THE NAME OF

THE BROWNIE'S CELL

I

To barren heath, bleak moor, and quaking fen,
Or depth of labyrinthine glen;
Or into trackless forest set
With trees, whose lofty umbrage met;

World-wearied Men withdrew of yore;
(Penance their trust, and prayer their store;)
And in the wilderness were bound
To such apartments as they found,
Or with a new ambition raised;
That God might suitably be praised.

II

High lodged the *Warrior*, like a bird of prey;
Or where broad waters round him lay:
But this wild Ruin is no ghost
Of his devices—buried, lost!
Within this little lonely isle
There stood a consecrated Pile,
Where tapers burned, and mass was sung,
For them whose timid Spirits clung
To mortal succour, though the tomb
Had fixed, for ever fixed, their doom!

III

Upon those servants of another world
When madding Power her bolts had hurled,
Their habitation shook;—it fell,
And perished, save one narrow cell;
Whither, at length, a Wretch retired
Who neither grovelled nor aspired:
He, struggling in the net of pride,
The future scorned, the past defied;
Still tempering, from the unguilty forge
Of vain conceit, an iron scourge!

IV

Proud Remnant was he of a fearless Race,
Who stood and flourished face to face
With their perennial hills;—but Crime,
Hastening the stern decrees of Time,
Brought low a Power, which from its home
Burst, when repose grew wearisome;
And, taking impulse from the sword,
And, mocking its own plighted word,
Had found, in ravage widely dealt,
Its warfare's bourn, its travel's belt!

V

All, all were dispossessed, save him whose smile
Shot lightning through this lonely Isle!
No right had he but what he made
To this small spot, his leafy shade;
But the ground lay within that ring
To which he only dared to cling;
Renouncing here, as worse than dead,
The craven few who bowed the head
Beneath the change; who heard a claim
How loud! yet lived in peace with shame.

VI

From year to year this shaggy Mortal went
(So seemed it) down a strange descent:
Till they, who saw his outward frame,
Fixed on him an unhallowed name;
Him, free from all malicious taint,
And guiding, like the Patmos Saint,
A pen unwearied—to indite,
In his lone Isle, the dreams of night;
Impassioned dreams, that strove to span
The faded glories of his Clan!

VII

Suns that through blood their western harbour sought,
And stars that in their courses fought;
Towers rent, winds combating with woods,
Lands deluged by unbridled floods;
And beast and bird that from the spell
Of sleep took import terrible;—
These types mysterious (if the show
Of battle and the routed foe
Had failed) would furnish an array
Of matter for the dawning day!

VIII

How disappeared He?—ask the newt and toad,
Inheritors of his abode;
The otter crouching undisturbed,
In her dank cleft;—but be thou curbed,
O froward Fancy! 'mid a scene
Of aspect winning and serene;
For those offensive creatures shun
The inquisition of the sun!
And in this region flowers delight,
And all is lovely to the sight.

IX

Spring finds not here a melancholy breast,
When she applies her annual test
To dead and living; when her breath
Quickens, as now, the withered heath;—
Nor flaunting Summer—when he throws
His soul into the briar-rose;
Or calls the lily from her sleep
Prolonged beneath the bordering deep;

Nor Autumn, when the viewless wren
Is warbling near the BROWNIE'S Den.

X

Wild Relique! beauteous as the chosen spot
In Nysa's isle, the embellished grot;
Whither, by care of Libyan Jove,
(High Servant of paternal Love)
Young Bacchus was conveyed—to lie
Safe from his step-dame Rhea's eye;
Where bud, and bloom, and fruitage, glowed,
Close-crowding round the infant-god;
All colours,—and the liveliest streak
A foil to his celestial cheek!

II

COMPOSED AT CORA LINN,

IN SIGHT OF WALLACE'S TOWER

I had seen this celebrated Waterfall twice before; but the feelings, to which it had given birth, were not expressed till they recurred in presence of the object on this occasion.

"—How Wallace fought for Scotland, left the name
Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
All over his dear Country; left the deeds
Of Wallace, like a family of ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks,
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty."—See p. 238.

LORD of the vale! astounding Flood;
The dullest leaf in this thick wood
Quakes—conscious of thy power;
The caves reply with hollow moan;
And vibrates, to its central stone,
Yon time-cemented Tower!

And yet how fair the rural scene!
For thou, O Clyde, hast ever been
Beneficent as strong;
Pleased in refreshing dews to steep
The little trembling flowers that peep
Thy shelving rocks among.

Hence all who love their country, love
To look on thee—delight to rove
Where they thy voice can hear;
And, to the patriot-warrior's Shade,
Lord of the vale! to Heroes laid
In dust, that voice is dear!

Along thy banks, at dead of night
Sweeps visibly the Wallace Wight;
Or stands, in warlike vest,
Aloft, beneath the moon's pale beam,
A Champion worthy of the stream,
Yon grey tower's living crest!

But clouds and envious darkness hide
A Form not doubtfully descried:—
Their transient mission o'er,
O say to what blind region flee
These Shapes of awful phantasy?
To what untrodden shore?

Less than divine command they spurn;
But this we from the mountains learn,
And this the valleys show;
That never will they deign to hold
Communion where the heart is cold
To human weal and woe.

The man of abject soul in vain
Shall walk the Marathonian plain;
Or thrid the shadowy gloom,
That still invests the guardian Pass,
Where stood, sublime, Leonidas
Devoted to the tomb.

And let no Slave his head incline,
Or kneel, before the votive shrine
By Uri's lake, where Tell
Leapt, from his storm-vext boat, to land,
Heaven's Instrument, for by his hand
That day the Tyrant fell.

III

EFFUSION

IN THE PLEASURE-GROUND ON THE BANKS OF THE BRAN, NEAR DUNKELD

I am not aware that this condemnatory effusion was ever seen by the owner of the place. He might be disposed to pay little attention to it; but were it to prove otherwise I should be glad, for the whole exhibition is distressingly puerile.

"The waterfall, by a loud roaring, warned us when we must expect it. We were first, however, conducted into a small apartment, where the Gardener desired us to look at a picture of Ossian, which, while he was telling the history of the young Artist who executed the work, disappeared, parting in the middle—flying asunder as by the touch of magic—and lo! we are at the entrance of a splendid apartment, which was almost dizzy and alive with waterfalls, that tumbled in all directions; the great cascade, opposite the window, which faced us, being reflected in innumerable mirrors upon the ceiling and against the walls."—*Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-Traveller.*

WHAT He—who, 'mid the kindred throng
Of Heroes that inspired his song,
Doth yet frequent the hill of storms,
The stars dim-twinkling through their forms!
What! Ossian here—a painted Thrall,
Mute fixture on a stuccoed wall;
To serve—an unsuspected screen
For show that must not yet be seen;
And, when the moment comes, to part
And vanish by mysterious art;
Head, harp, and body, split asunder,
For ingress to a world of wonder;
A gay saloon, with waters dancing
Upon the sight wherever glancing;
One loud cascade in front, and lo!
A thousand like it, white as snow—
Streams on the walls, and torrent-foam
As active round the hollow dome,
Illusive cataracts! of their terrors
Not stripped, nor voiceless in the mirrors,
That catch the pageant from the flood
Thundering adown a rocky wood.
What pains to dazzle and confound!
What strife of colour, shape and sound
In this quaint medley, that might seem
Devised out of a sick man's dream!
Strange scene, fantastic and uneasy
As ever made a maniac dizzy,
When disenchanted from the mood
That loves on sullen thoughts to brood!
O Nature—in thy changeful visions,
Through all thy most abrupt transitions
Smooth, graceful, tender, or sublime—
Ever averse to pantomime,
Thee neither do they know nor us
Thy servants, who can trifle thus;
Else verily the sober powers
Of rock that frowns, and stream that roars,
Exalted by congenial sway
Of Spirits, and the undying Lay,
And Names that moulder not away,
Had wakened some redeeming thought
More worthy of this favoured Spot;
Recalled some feeling—to set free
The Bard from such indignity!
[1] The Effigies of a valiant Wight
I once beheld, a Templar Knight;
Not prostrate, not like those that rest
On tombs, with palms together prest,
But sculptured out of living stone,
And standing upright and alone,
Both hands with rival energy
Employed in setting his sword free
From its dull sheath—stern sentinel
Intent to guard St. Robert's cell;
As if with memory of the affray
Far distant, when, as legends say,
The Monks of Fountain's thronged to force
From its dear home the Hermit's corse,
That in their keeping it might lie,
To crown their abbey's sanctity.
So had they rushed into the grot
Of sense despised, a world forgot,
And torn him from his loved retreat,
Where altar-stone and rock-hewn seat
Still hint that quiet best is found,
Even by the *Living*, under ground;
But a bold Knight, the selfish aim
Defeating, put the monks to shame,
There where you see his Image stand
Bare to the sky, with threatening brand
Which lingering NID is proud to show
Reflected in the pool below.
Thus, like the men of earliest days,
Our sires set forth their grateful praise:
Uncouth the workmanship, and rude!
But, nursed in mountain solitude,
Might some aspiring artist dare
To seize whate'er, through misty air,
A ghost, by glimpses, may present
Of imitable lineament,
And give the phantom an array
That less should scorn the abandoned clay;
Then let him hew with patient stroke
An Ossian out of mural rock,
And leave the figurative Man—
Upon thy margin, roaring Bran!—
Fixed, like the Templar of the steep,
An everlasting watch to keep;
With local sanctities in trust,
More precious than a hermit's dust;
And virtues through the mass infused,
Which old idolatry abused.
What though the Granite would deny
All fervour to the sightless eye;
And touch from rising suns in vain
Solicit a Memnonian strain;

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[1] On the banks of the River Nid, near Knaresborough.

Yet, in some fit of anger sharp,
The wind might force the deep-grooved harp
To utter melancholy moans
Not unconnected with the tones
Of soul-sick flesh and weary bones;
While grove and river notes would lend,
Less deeply sad, with these to blend!
Vain pleasures of luxurious life,
For ever with yourselves at strife;
Through town and country both deranged
By affectations interchanged,
And all the perishable gauds
That heaven-deserted man applauds;
When will your hapless patrons learn
To watch and ponder—to discern
The freshness, the everlasting youth,
Of admiration sprung from truth;
From beauty infinitely growing
Upon a mind with love o'erflowing—
To sound the depths of every Art
That seeks its wisdom through the heart?
Thus (where the intrusive Pile, ill-graced
With baubles of theatric taste,
O'erlooks the torrent breathing showers
On motley bands of alien flowers
In stiff confusion set or sown,
Till Nature cannot find her own,
Or keep a remnant of the sod
Which Caledonian Heroes trod)
I mused; and, thirsting for redress,
Recoiled into the wilderness.

IV

YARROW VISITED

SEPTEMBER 1814

(See page 195.)

As mentioned in my verses on the death of the Ettrick Shepherd, my first visit to Yarrow was in his company. We had lodged the night before at Traquhair, where Hogg had joined us and also Dr. Anderson, the Editor of the British Poets, who was on a visit at the Manse. Dr. A. walked with us till we came in view of the Vale of Yarrow, and, being advanced in life, he then turned back. The old Man was passionately fond of poetry, though with not much of a discriminating judgment, as the Volumes he edited sufficiently show. But I was much pleased to meet with him, and to acknowledge my obligation to his collection, which had been my brother John's companion in more than one voyage to India, and which he gave me before his departure from Grasmere, never to return. Through these Volumes I became first familiar with Chaucer, and so little money had I then to spare for books, that, in all probability, but for this same work, I should have known little of Drayton, Daniel, and other distinguished poets of the Elizabethan age, and their immediate successors, till a much later period of my life. I am glad to record this, not from any importance of its own, but as a tribute of gratitude to this simple-hearted old man, whom I never again had the pleasure of meeting. I seldom read or think of this poem without regretting that my dear Sister was not of the party, as she would have had so much delight in recalling the time when, travelling together in Scotland, we declined going in search of this celebrated stream, not altogether, I will frankly confess, for the reasons assigned in the poem on the occasion.

AND is this—Yarrow?—*This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary!
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength;
And age to wear away in!
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there—
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreathed my own!
'Twere no offence to reason;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

"FROM THE DARK CHAMBERS OF DEJECTION FREED"

Composed in Edinburgh, during my Scotch tour with Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister Miss Hutchinson, in the year 1814. Poor Gillies never rose above that course of extravagance in which he was at that time living, and which soon reduced him to poverty and all its degrading shifts, mendicity being far from the worst. I grieve whenever I think of him, for he was far from being without genius, and had a generous heart, not always to be found in men given up to profusion. He was nephew of Lord Gillies the Scotch judge, and also of the historian of Greece. He was cousin to Miss Margaret Gillies, who painted so many portraits with success in our house.

FROM the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, GILLIES, rise; the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a wingèd steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a rich guerdon waits on minds that dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,
And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heavenward they direct.—Then droop not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell 'mid Roslin's faded grove:
A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

1814.

LINES

WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF IN A COPY OF THE AUTHOR'S POEM "THE EXCURSION," UPON HEARING OF THE DEATH OF THE LATE VICAR OF KENDAL.

To public notice, with reluctance strong,
Did I deliver this unfinished Song;

Yet for one happy issue;—and I look
With self-congratulation on the Book
Which pious, learned, MURFITT saw and read;—
Upon my thoughts his saintly Spirit fed;
He conned the new-born Lay with grateful heart—
Foreboding not how soon he must depart;
Unweeting that to him the joy was given
Which good men take with them from earth to heaven.
1814.

TO B. R. HAYDON

HIGH is our calling, Friend!—Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness—
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!
1815.

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE

(SEE THE CHRONICLE OF GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH AND MILTON'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND)

This was written at Rydal Mount, as a token of affectionate respect for the memory of Milton. "I have determined," says he, in his preface to his History of England, "to bestow the telling over even of these reputed tales, be it for nothing else but in favour of our English Poets and Rhetoricians, who by their wit will know how to use them judiciously."

WHERE be the temples which, in Britain's Isle,
For his paternal Gods, the Trojan raised?
Gone like a morning dream, or like a pile
Of clouds that in cerulean ether blazed!
Ere Julius landed on her white-cliffed shore,
They sank, delivered o'er
To fatal dissolution; and, I ween,
No vestige then was left that such had ever been.

Nathless, a British record (long concealed
In old Armorica, whose secret springs
No Gothic conqueror ever drank) revealed
The marvellous current of forgotten things;
How Brutus came, by oracles impelled,
And Albion's giants quelled,
A brood whom no civility could melt,
"Who never tasted grace, and goodness ne'er had felt."

By brave Corineus aided, he subdued,
And rooted out the intolerable kind;
And this too-long-polluted land imbued
With goodly arts and usages refined;
Whence golden harvests, cities, warlike towers,
And pleasure's sumptuous bowers;
Whence all the fixed delights of house and home,
Friendships that will not break, and love that cannot roam.

O, happy Britain! region all too fair
For self-delighting fancy to endure
That silence only should inhabit there,
Wild beasts, or uncouth savages impure!
But, intermingled with the generous seed,
Grew many a poisonous weed;
Thus fares it still with all that takes its birth
From human care, or grows upon the breast of earth.

Hence, and how soon! that war of vengeance waged
By Guendolen against her faithless lord;
Till she, in jealous fury unassuaged
Had slain his paramour with ruthless sword:
Then, into Severn hideously defiled,
She flung her blameless child,
Sabrina,—vowing that the stream should bear
That name through every age, her hatred to declare.

So speaks the Chronicle, and tells of Lear
By his ungrateful daughters turned adrift.

Ye lightnings, hear his voice!—they cannot hear,
Nor can the winds restore his simple gift.
But One there is, a Child of nature meek,
Who comes her Sire to seek;
And he, recovering sense, upon her breast
Leans smilingly, and sinks into a perfect rest.

There too we read of Spenser's fairy themes,
And those that Milton loved in youthful years;
The sage enchanter Merlin's subtle schemes;
The feats of Arthur and his knightly peers;
Of Arthur,—who, to upper light restored,
With that terrific sword
Which yet he brandishes for future war,
Shall lift his country's fame above the polar star!

What wonder, then, if in such ample field
Of old tradition, one particular flower
Doth seemingly in vain its fragrance yield,
And bloom unnoticed even to this late hour?
Now, gentle Muses, your assistance grant,
While I this flower transplant
Into a garden stored with Poesy;
Where flowers and herbs unite, and haply some weeds be,
That, wanting not wild grace, are from all mischief free!

A King more worthy of respect and love
Than wise Gorbonian ruled not in his day;
And grateful Britain prospered far above
All neighbouring countries through his righteous sway;
He poured rewards and honours on the good;
The oppressor he withstood;
And while he served the Gods with reverence due
Fields smiled, and temples rose, and towns and cities grew.

He died, whom Artegal succeeds—his son;
But how unworthy of that sire was he!
A hopeful reign, auspiciously begun,
Was darkened soon by foul iniquity.
From crime to crime he mounted, till at length
The nobles leagued their strength
With a vexed people, and the tyrant chased;
And, on the vacant throne, his worthier Brother placed.

From realm to realm the humbled Exile went,
Suppliant for aid his kingdom to regain;
In many a court, and many a warrior's tent,
He urged his persevering suit in vain.
Him, in whose wretched heart ambition failed,
Dire poverty assailed;
And, tired with slights his pride no more could brook,
He towards his native country cast a longing look.

Fair blew the wished-for wind—the voyage sped;
He landed; and, by many dangers scared,
"Poorly provided, poorly followèd,"
To Calaterium's forest he repaired.
How changed from him who, born to highest place,
Had swayed the royal mace,
Flattered and feared, despised yet deified,
In Troynovant, his seat by silver Thames's side!

From that wild region where the crownless King
Lay in concealment with his scanty train,
Supporting life by water from the spring,
And such chance food as outlaws can obtain,
Unto the few whom he esteems his friends
A messenger he sends;
And from their secret loyalty requires
Shelter and daily bread,—the sum of his desires.

While he the issue waits, at early morn
Wandering by stealth abroad, he chanced to hear
A startling outcry made by hound and horn,
From which the tusky wild boar flies in fear;
And, scouring toward him o'er the grassy plain,
Behold the hunter train!

He bids his little company advance
With seeming unconcern and steady countenance.

The royal Elidure, who leads the chase,
Hath checked his foaming courser:—can it be!
Methinks that I should recognise that face,
Though much disguised by long adversity!
He gazed rejoicing, and again he gazed,
Confounded and amazed—
"It is the king, my brother!" and, by sound
Of his own voice confirmed, he leaps upon the ground.

Long, strict, and tender was the embrace he gave,
Feebly returned by daunted Artegal;
Whose natural affection doubts enslave,
And apprehensions dark and criminal.
Loth to restrain the moving interview,
The attendant lords withdrew;
And, while they stood upon the plain apart,
Thus Elidure, by words, relieved his struggling heart.

"By heavenly Powers conducted, we have met;
—O Brother! to my knowledge lost so long,
But neither lost to love, nor to regret,
Nor to my wishes lost;—forgive the wrong,
(Such it may seem) if I thy crown have borne,
Thy royal mantle worn:
I was their natural guardian; and 'tis just
That now I should restore what hath been held in trust."

A while the astonished Artegal stood mute,
Then thus exclaimed: "To me, of titles shorn,
And stripped of power! me, feeble, destitute,
To me a kingdom! spare the bitter scorn:
If justice ruled the breast of foreign kings,
Then, on the wide-spread wings
Of war, had I returned to claim my right;
This will I here avow, not dreading thy despite."

"I do not blame thee," Elidure replied;
"But, if my looks did with my words agree,
I should at once be trusted, not defied,
And thou from all disquietude be free.
May the unsullied Goddess of the chase,
Who to this blessed place
At this blest moment led me, if I speak
With insincere intent, on me her vengeance wreak!

"Were this same spear, which in my hand I grasp.
The British sceptre, here would I to thee
The symbol yield; and would undo this clasp,
If it confined the robe of sovereignty.
Odious to me the pomp of regal court,
And joyless sylvan sport,
While thou art roving, wretched and forlorn,
Thy couch the dewy earth, thy roof the forest thorn!"

Then Artegal thus spake: "I only sought,
Within this realm a place of safe retreat;
Beware of rousing an ambitious thought;
Beware of kindling hopes, for me unmeet!
Thou art reputed wise, but in my mind
Art pitiably blind:
Full soon this generous purpose thou may'st rue,
When that which has been done no wishes can undo.

"Who, when a crown is fixed upon his head,
Would balance claim with claim, and right with right?
But thou—I know not how inspired, how led—
Wouldst change the course of things in all men's sight!
And this for one who cannot imitate
Thy virtue, who may hate:
For, if, by such strange sacrifice restored,
He reign, thou still must be his king, and sovereign lord;

"Lifted in magnanimity above
Aught that my feeble nature could perform,
Or even conceive; surpassing me in love
Far as in power the eagle doth the worm.
I, Brother! only should be king in name,
And govern to my shame;
A shadow in a hated land, while all
Of glad or willing service to thy share would fall."

"Believe it not," said Elidure; "respect
Awaits on virtuous life, and ever most
Attends on goodness with dominion decked,
Which stands the universal empire's boast;
This can thy own experience testify:
Nor shall thy foes deny
That, in the gracious opening of thy reign,
Our father's spirit seemed in thee to breathe again.

"And what if o'er thy bright unbosoming
Clouds of disgrace and envious fortune past!
Have we not seen the glories of the spring
By veil of noontide darkness overcast?
The frith that glittered like a warrior's shield,
The sky, the gay green field,
Are vanished; gladness ceases in the groves,
And trepidation strikes the blackened mountain-coves.

"But is that gloom dissolved? how passing clear
Seems the wide world, far brighter than before!
Even so thy latent worth will re-appear,
Gladdening the people's heart from shore to shore;
For youthful faults ripe virtues shall atone;
Re-seated on thy throne,
Proof shalt thou furnish that misfortune, pain,
And sorrow, have confirmed thy native right to reign.

"But, not to overlook what thou may'st know,
Thy enemies are neither weak nor few;
And circumspect must be our course, and slow,
Or from my purpose ruin may ensue.
Dismiss thy followers;—let them calmly wait
Such change in thy estate
As I already have in thought devised;
And which, with caution due, may soon be realised."

The Story tells what courses were pursued,
Until king Elidure, with full consent
Of all his peers, before the multitude,
Rose,—and, to consummate this just intent,
Did place upon his brother's head the crown,
Relinquished by his own;
Then to his people cried, "Receive your lord,
Gorbonian's first-born son, your rightful king restored!"

The people answered with a loud acclaim:
Yet more;—heart-smitten by the heroic deed,
The reinstated Artegal became
Earth's noblest penitent; from bondage freed
Of vice—thenceforth unable to subvert
Or shake his high desert.
Long did he reign; and, when he died, the tear
Of universal grief bedewed his honoured bier.

Thus was a Brother by a Brother saved;
With whom a crown (temptation that hath set
Discord in hearts of men till they have braved
Their nearest kin with deadly purpose met)
'Gainst duty weighed, and faithful love, did seem
A thing of no esteem;
And, from this triumph of affection pure,
He bore the lasting name of "pious Elidure."

1815.

SEPTEMBER 1815

"For me who under kindlier laws." This conclusion has more than once, to my great regret, excited painfully sad feelings in the hearts of young persons fond of poetry and poetic composition, by contrast of their feeble and declining health with that state of robust constitution which prompted me to rejoice in a season of frost and snow as more favourable to the Muses than summer itself.

While not a leaf seems faded; while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask; this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware;
And whispers to the silent birds, "Prepare
Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields."

For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature's tuneful quire, this rustling dry
Through leaves yet green, and yon crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
'Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song,
And nobler cares than listless summer knew.

NOVEMBER 1

Suggested on the banks of the Brathay by the sight of Langdale Pikes. It is delightful to remember these moments of far-distant days, which probably would have been forgotten if the impression had not been transferred to verse. The same observation applies to the next.

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
Which, strewn with snow smooth as the sky can shed,
Shines like another sun—on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head—
Terrestrial, but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing,
Unswept, unstained? Nor shall the aërial Powers
Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Has filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers. 1815.

"THE FAIREST, BRIGHTEST, HUES OF ETHER FADE"[1]

Suggested at Hacket, which is on the craggy ridge that rises between the two Langdales and looks towards Windermere. The Cottage of Hacket was often visited by us, and at the time when this Sonnet was written, and long after, was occupied by the husband and wife described in the "Excursion," where it is mentioned that she was in the habit of walking in the front of the dwelling with a light to guide her husband home at night. The same cottage is alluded to in the "Epistle to Sir George Beaumont" as that from which the female peasant hailed us on our morning journey. The musician mentioned in the Sonnet was the Rev. Samuel Tillbrook of Peter-house, Cambridge, who remodelled the Ivy Cottage at Rydal after he had purchased it.

THE fairest, brightest, hues of ether fade;
The sweetest notes must terminate and die;
O Friend! thy flute has breathed a harmony
Softly resounded through this rocky glade;
Such strains of rapture as[2] the Genius played
In his still haunt on Bagdad's summit high;
He who stood visible to Mirza's eye,
Never before to human sight betrayed.
Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread!
The visionary Arches are not there,
Nor the green Islands, nor the shining Seas:
Yet sacred is to me this Mountain's head,
Whence I have risen, uplifted, on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.

"WEAK IS THE WILL OF MAN, HIS JUDGMENT BLIND"

'WEAK is the will of Man, his judgment blind;
'Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;
'Heavy is woe;—and joy, for human-kind,
'A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!'
Thus might *he* paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined;
'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of Faith, and round the Sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

"HAIL, TWILIGHT, SOVEREIGN OF ONE PEACEFUL HOUR"

HAIL, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!
Not dull art Thou as undiscerning Night;

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[1] This and the following eight sonnets between the years 1810-15.

[2] See the Vision of Mirza in the *Spectator*.

But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions. — Ancient Power !
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower,
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was seen
The self-same Vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power ! brought forth
These mighty barriers, and the gulf between ;
The flood, the stars,—a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth !

"THE SHEPHERD, LOOKING EASTWARD, SOFTLY SAID"

THE Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said,
"Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art bright !"
Forthwith, that little cloud, in ether spread
And penetrated all with tender light,
She cast away, and showed her fulgent head
Uncovered ; dazzling the Beholder's sight
As if to vindicate her beauty's right
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparagèd.
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went floating from her, darkening as it went ;
And a huge mass, to bury or to hide,
Approached this glory of the firmament ;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured—content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

"EVEN AS A DRAGON'S EYE THAT FEELS THE STRESS"

EVEN as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimming sleep, or as a lamp
Suddenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon Taper 'mid a black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless :
The lake below reflects it not ; the sky,
Muffled in clouds, affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet, round the body of that joyless Thing
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
A gay society with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing ;—or they sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

"MARK THE CONCENTRED HAZELS THAT ENCLOSE"

Suggested in the wild hazel wood at the foot of Helm-crag, where the stone still lies, with others of like form and character, though much of the wood that veiled it from the glare of day has been felled. This beautiful ground was lately purchased by our friend Mrs. Fletcher, the ancient owners, most respected persons, being obliged to part with it in consequence of the imprudence of a son. It is gratifying to mention that, instead of murmuring and repining at this change of fortune, they offered their services to Mrs. Fletcher, the husband as an out-door labourer, and the wife as a domestic servant. I have witnessed the pride and pleasure with which the man worked at improvements of the ground round the house. Indeed he expressed those feelings to me himself, and the countenance and manner of his wife always denoted feelings of the same character. I believe a similar disposition to contentment under change of fortune is common among the class to which these good people belong. Yet, in proof that to part with their patrimony is most painful to them, I may refer to those stanzas entitled "Repentance," no inconsiderable part of which was taken verbatim from the language of the speaker herself.

MARK the concentred hazels that enclose
Yon old grey Stone, protected from the ray
Of noontide suns :—and even the beams that play
And glance, while wantonly the rough wind blows,
Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof, amid embowering gloom,
The very image framing of a Tomb,
In which some ancient Chieftain finds repose
Among the lonely mountains.—Live, ye trees !
And thou, grey Stone, the pensive likeness keep
Of a dark chamber where the Mighty sleep :
For more than Fancy to the influence bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time's forlorn humanities.

TO THE POET, JOHN DYER

Bard of the Fleece, whose skilful genius made
That work a living landscape fair and bright;
Nor hallowed less with musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood strayed,
Those southern tracts of Cambria, "deep embayed,
With green hills fenced, with ocean's murmur lulled;"
Though hasty Fame hath many a chaplet culled
For worthless brows, while in the pensive shade
Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced,
Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
A grateful few, shall love thy modest Lay,
Long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aërial waste;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill!

"BROOK! WHOSE SOCIETY THE POET SEEKS"

Brook! whose society the Poet seeks,
Intent his wasted spirits to renew;
And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
And tracks thee dancing down thy water-breaks;
If wish were mine some type of thee to view,
Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian Artists, give thee human cheeks,
Channels for tears; no Naiad should'st thou be,—
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints nor hairs:
It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
And hath bestowed on thee a safer good;
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

"SURPRISED BY JOY—IMPATIENT AS THE WIND"

This was in fact suggested by my daughter Catharine long after her death.

Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss?—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

ODE

THE MORNING OF THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL THANKSGIVING. JANUARY 18, 1816[1]

The first stanza of this Ode was composed almost extempore, in front of Rydal Mount, before church-time, and on such a morning and precisely with such objects before my eyes as are here described. The view taken of Napoleon's character and proceedings is little in accordance with that taken by some historians and critical philosophers. I am glad and proud of the difference, and trust that this series of poems, infinitely below the subject as they are, will survive to counteract, in unsophisticated minds, the pernicious and degrading tendency of those views and doctrines that lead to the idolatry of power, as power, and, in that false splendour to lose sight of its real nature and constitution as it often acts for the gratification of its possessor without reference to a beneficial end—an infirmity that has characterised men of all ages, classes, and employments, since Nimrod became a mighty hunter before the Lord.

I

Hail, orient Conqueror of gloomy Night!
Thou that canst shed the bliss of gratitude

[1] See Note.

On hearts howe'er insensible or rude;
Whether thy punctual visitations smite
The haughty towers where monarchs dwell;
Or thou, impartial Sun, with presence bright
Cheer'st the low threshold of the peasant's cell!
Not unrejoiced I see thee climb the sky
In naked splendour, clear from mist or haze,
Or cloud approaching to divert the rays,
Which even in deepest winter testify
Thy power and majesty,
Dazzling the vision that presumes to gaze.
—Well does thine aspect usher in this Day;
As aptly suits therewith that modest pace
Submitted to the chains
That bind thee to the path which God ordains
That thou shalt trace,
Till, with the heavens and earth, thou pass away!
Nor less, the stillness of these frosty plains,
Their utter stillness, and the silent grace
Of yon ethereal summits white with snow,
(Whose tranquil pomp and spotless purity
Report of storms gone by
To us who tread below)
Do with the service of this Day accord.
—Divinest Object which the uplifted eye
Of mortal man is suffered to behold;
Thou, who upon those snow-clad Heights has poured
Meek lustre, nor forget'st the humble Vale;
Thou who dost warm Earth's universal mould,
And for thy bounty wert not unadored
By pious men of old;
Once more, heart-cheering Sun, I bid thee hail!
Bright be thy course to-day, let not this promise fail!

II

'Mid the deep quiet of this morning hour,
All nature seems to hear me while I speak,
By feelings urged that do not vainly seek
Apt language, ready as the tuneful notes
That stream in blithe succession from the throats
Of birds, in leafy bower,
Warbling a farewell to a vernal shower.
—There is a radiant though a short-lived flame,
That burns for Poets in the dawning east;
And oft my soul hath kindled at the same,
When the captivity of sleep had ceased;
But He who fixed immoveably the frame
Of the round world, and built, by laws as strong,
A solid refuge for distress—
The towers of righteousness;
He knows that from a holier altar came
The quickening spark of this day's sacrifice;
Knows that the source is nobler whence doth rise
The current of this matin song;
That deeper far it lies
Than aught dependent on the fickle skies.

III

Have we not conquered?—by the vengeful sword?
Ah no, by dint of Magnanimity;
That curbed the baser passions, and left free
A loyal band to follow their liege Lord
Clear-sighted Honour, and his staid Compeers,
Along a track of most unnatural years;
In execution of heroic deeds
Whose memory, spotless as the crystal beads
Of morning dew upon the untrodden meads,
Shall live enrolled above the starry spheres.
He, who in concert with an earthly string
Of Britain's acts would sing,
He with enraptured voice will tell
Of One whose spirit no reverse could quell;
Of One that 'mid the failing never failed—
Who paints how Britain struggled and prevailed
Shall represent her labouring with an eye
Of circumspect humanity;
Shall show her clothed with strength and skill,
All martial duties to fulfil;
Firm as a rock in stationary fight;
In motion rapid as the lightning's gleam;
Fierce as a flood-gate bursting at midnight
To rouse the wicked from their giddy dream—
Woe, woe to all that face her in the field!
Appalled she may not be, and cannot yield.

IV

And thus is *missed* the sole true glory
That can belong to human story!

At which they only shall arrive
Who through the abyss of weakness dive.
The very humblest are too proud of heart;
And one brief day is rightly set apart
For Him who lifteth up and layeth low;
For that Almighty God to whom we owe,
Say not that we have vanquished—but that we survive.

V

How dreadful the dominion of the impure!
Why should the Song be tardy to proclaim
That less than power unbounded could not tame
That soul of Evil—which, from hell let loose,
Had filled the astonished world with such abuse
As boundless patience only could endure?
—Wide-wasted regions—cities wrapt in flame—
Who sees, may lift a streaming eye
To Heaven;—who never saw, may heave a sigh;
But the foundation of our nature shakes,
And with an infinite pain the spirit aches,
When desolated countries, towns on fire,
Are but the avowed attire
Of warfare waged with desperate mind
Against the life of virtue in mankind;
Assaulting without ruth
The citadels of truth;
While the fair gardens of civility,
By ignorance defaced,
By violence laid waste,
Perish without reprieve for flower or tree!

VI

A crouching purpose—a distracted will—
Opposed to hopes that battened upon scorn,
And to desires whose ever-waxing horn
Not all the light of earthly power could fill;
Opposed to dark, deep plots of patient skill,
And to celerities of lawless force;
Which, spurning God, had flung away remorse—
What could they gain but shadows of redress?
—So bad proceeded propagating worse;
And discipline was passion's dire excess.[1]
Widens the fatal web, its lines extend,
And deadlier poisons in the chalice blend.
When will your trials teach you to be wise?
—O prostrate Lands, consult your agonies!

VII

No more—the guilt is banished,
And, with the guilt, the shame is fled;
And, with the guilt and shame, the Woe hath vanished,
Shaking the dust and ashes from her head!
—No more—these lingerings of distress
Sully the limpid stream of thankfulness.
What robe can Gratitude employ
So seemly as the radiant vest of Joy?
What steps so suitable as those that move
In prompt obedience to spontaneous measures
Of glory, and felicity, and love,
Surrendering the whole heart to sacred pleasures?

VIII

O Britain! dearer far than life is dear,
If one there be
Of all thy progeny
Who can forget thy prowess, never more
Be that ungrateful Son allowed to hear
Thy green leaves rustle or thy torrents roar.
As springs the lion from his den,
As from a forest-brake
Upstarts a glistering snake,
The bold Arch-despot re-appeared;—again
Wide Europe heaves, impatient to be cast,
With all her armèd Powers,
On that offensive soil, like waves upon a thousand shores.
The trumpet blew a universal blast!
But Thou art foremost in the field:—there stand:
Receive the triumph destined to thy hand!
All States have glorified themselves;—their claims
Are weighed by Providence, in balance even;
And now, in preference to the mightiest names,
To Thee the exterminating sword is given.
Dread mark of approbation, justly gained!
Exalted office, worthily sustained!

IX

Preserve, O Lord! within our hearts
The memory of thy favour,

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[1] See Note.

That else insensibly departs,
And loses its sweet savour!
Lodge it within us!—as the power of light
Lives inexhaustibly in precious gems,
Fixed on the front of Eastern diadems,
So shine our thankfulness for ever bright!
What offering, what transcendent monument
Shall our sincerity to Thee present?
—Not work of hands; but trophies that may reach
To highest Heaven—the labour of the Soul;
That builds, as thy unerring precepts teach,
Upon the internal conquests made by each,
Her hope of lasting glory for the whole.
Yet will not heaven disown nor earth gainsay
The outward service of this day;
Whether the worshippers entreat
Forgiveness from God's mercy-seat;
Or thanks and praises to His throne ascend
That He has brought our warfare to an end,
And that we need no second victory!——
Ha! what a ghastly sight for man to see;
And to the heavenly saints in peace who dwell,
For a brief moment, terrible;
But, to thy sovereign penetration, fair,
Before whom all things are, that were,
All judgments that have been, or e'er shall be;
Links in the chain of thy tranquillity!
Along the bosom of this favoured Nation,
Breathe Thou, this day, a vital undulation!
Let all who do this land inherit
Be conscious of thy moving spirit!
Oh, 'tis a goodly Ordinance,—the sight,
Though sprung from bleeding war, is one of pure delight;
Bless Thou the hour, or ere the hour arrive,
When a whole people shall kneel down in prayer,
And, at one moment, in one rapture, strive
With lip and heart to tell their gratitude
For thy protecting care,
Their solemn joy—praising the Eternal Lord
For tyranny subdued,
And for the sway of equity renewed,
For liberty confirmed, and peace restored!

X

But hark—the summons!—down the placid lake
Floats the soft cadence of the church-tower bells;
Bright shines the Sun, as if his beams would wake
The tender insects sleeping in their cells;
Bright shines the Sun—and not a breeze to shake
The drops that tip the melting icicles.
O, enter now his temple gate!
Inviting words—perchance already flung
(As the crowd press devoutly down the aisle
Of some old Minster's venerable pile)
From voices into zealous passion stung,
While the tubed engine feels the inspiring blast,
And has begun—its clouds of sound to cast
Forth towards empyreal Heaven,
As if the fretted roof were riven.
Us, humbler ceremonies now await;
But in the bosom, with devout respect
The banner of our joy we will erect,
And strength of love our souls shall elevate:
For to a few collected in his name,
Their heavenly Father will incline an ear
Gracious to service hallowed by its aim;—
Awake! the majesty of God revere!
Go—and with foreheads meekly bowed
Present your prayers—go—and rejoice aloud—
The Holy One will hear!
And what, 'mid silence deep, with faith sincere,
Ye, in your low and undisturbed estate,
Shall simply feel and purely meditate—
Of warnings—from the unprecedented might,
Which, in our time, the impious have disclosed;
And of more arduous duties thence imposed
Upon the future advocates of right;
Of mysteries revealed,
And judgments unrepealed,
Of earthly revolution,
And final retribution,—
To his omniscience will appear
An offering not unworthy to find place,
On this high Day of Thanks, before the Throne of Grace!

ODE

I

Imagination—ne'er before content,
But aye ascending, restless in her pride

From all that martial feats could yield
To her desires, or to her hopes present—
Stooped to the Victory, on that Belgic field,
Achieved, this closing deed magnificent,
And with the embrace was satisfied.
—Fly, ministers of Fame,
With every help that ye from earth and heaven may claim!
Bear through the world these tidings of delight!
—Hours, Days, and Months, *have* borne them in the sight
Of mortals, hurrying like a sudden shower
That landward stretches from the sea,
The morning's splendours to devour;
But this swift travel scorns the company
Of irksome change, or threats from saddening power.
—The shock is given—the Adversaries bleed—
Lo, Justice triumphs! Earth is freed!
Joyful annunciation!—it went forth—
It pierced the caverns of the sluggish North—
It found no barrier on the ridge
Of Andes—frozen gulphs became its bridge—
The vast Pacific gladdens with the freight—
Upon the Lakes of Asia 'tis bestowed—
The Arabian desert shapes a willing road
Across her burning breast,
For this refreshing incense from the West!—
—Where snakes and lions breed,
Where towns and cities thick as stars appear,
Wherever fruits are gathered, and where'er
The upturned soil receives the hopeful seed—
While the Sun rules, and cross the shades of night—
The unwearied arrow hath pursued its flight!
The eyes of good men thankfully give heed,
And in its sparkling progress read
Of virtue crowned with glory's deathless meed:
Tyrants exult to hear of kingdoms won,
And slaves are pleased to learn that mighty feats are done;
Even the proud Realm, from whose distracted borders
This messenger of good was launched in air,
France, humbled France, amid her wild disorders,
Feels, and hereafter shall the truth declare,
That she too lacks not reason to rejoice,
And utter England's name with sadly-plausive voice.

II

O genuine glory, pure renown!
And well might it beseem that mighty Town
Into whose bosom earth's best treasures flow,
To whom all persecuted men retreat;
If a new Temple lift her votive brow
High on the shore of silver Thames—to greet
The peaceful guest advancing from afar.
Bright be the Fabric, as a star
Fresh risen, and beautiful within!—there meet
Dependence infinite, proportion just;
A Pile that Grace approves, and Time can trust
With his most sacred wealth, heroic dust.

III

But if the valiant of this land
In reverential modesty demand,
That all observance, due to them, be paid
Where their serene progenitors are laid;
Kings, warriors, high-souled poets, saint-like sages,
England's illustrious sons of long, long ages;
Be it not unordained that solemn rites,
Within the circuit of those Gothic walls,
Shall be performed at pregnant intervals;
Commemoration holy that unites
The living generations with the dead;
By the deep soul-moving sense
Of religious eloquence,—
By visual pomp, and by the tie
Of sweet and threatening harmony;
Soft notes, awful as the omen
Of destructive tempests coming,
And escaping from that sadness
Into elevated gladness;
While the white-robed choir attendant,
Under mouldering banners pendant,
Provoke all potent symphonies to raise
Songs of victory and praise,
For them who bravely stood unhurt, or bled

With medicable wounds, or found their graves
Upon the battle field, or under ocean's waves;
Or were conducted home in single state,
And long procession—there to lie,
Where their sons' sons, and all posterity,
Unheard by them, their deeds shall celebrate!

IV

Nor will the God of peace and love
Such martial service disapprove.
He guides the Pestilence—the cloud
Of locusts travels on his breath;
The region that in hope was ploughed
His drought consumes, his mildew taints with death;
He springs the hushed Volcano's mine,
He puts the Earthquake on her still design,
Darkens the sun, hath bade the forest sink,
And, drinking towns and cities, still can drink
Cities and towns—'tis Thou—the work is Thine!—
The fierce Tornado sleeps within thy courts—
He hears the word—he flies—
And navies perish in their ports;
For Thou art angry with thine enemies!
For these, and mourning for our errors,
And sins, that point their terrors,
We bow our heads before Thee, and we laud
And magnify thy name, Almighty God!
But Man is thy most awful instrument,
In working out a pure intent;
Thou cloth'st the wicked in their dazzling mail,
And for thy righteous purpose they prevail;
Thine arm from peril guards the coasts
Of them who in thy laws delight:
Thy presence turns the scale of doubtful fight,
Tremendous God of battles, Lord of Hosts!

V

Forbear:—to Thee—
Father and Judge of all, with fervent tongue
But in a gentler strain
Of contemplation, by no sense of wrong,
(Too quick and keen) incited to disdain
Of pity pleading from the heart in vain—
To THEE—To THEE—
Just God of christianised Humanity
Shall praises be poured forth, and thanks ascend,
That thou hast brought our warfare to an end,
And that we need no second victory!
Blest, above measure blest,
If on thy love our Land her hopes shall rest,
And all the Nations labour to fulfil
Thy law, and live henceforth in peace, in pure good will.
1816.

INVOCATION TO THE EARTH

FEBRUARY 1816

Composed immediately after the "Thanksgiving Ode," to which it may be considered as a second part.

I

"REST, rest, perturbèd Earth!
O rest, thou doleful Mother of Mankind!"
A Spirit sang in tones more plaintive than the wind:
"From regions where no evil thing has birth
I come—thy stains to wash away,
Thy cherished fetters to unbind,
And open thy sad eyes upon a milder day.
The Heavens are thronged with martyrs that have risen
From out thy noisome prison;
The penal caverns groan
With tens of thousands rent from off the tree
Of hopeful life,—by battle's whirlwind blown
Into the deserts of Eternity.
Unpitied havoc! Victims unlamented!
But not on high, where madness is resented,
And murder causes some sad tears to flow,
Though, from the widely-sweeping blow,
The choirs of Angels spread, triumphantly augmented.

II

"False Parent of Mankind!
Obdurate, proud, and blind,
I sprinkle thee with soft celestial dews,
Thy lost, maternal heart to re-infuse!
Scattering this far-fetched moisture from my wings,
Upon the act a blessing I implore,
Of which the rivers in their secret springs,
The rivers stained so oft with human gore,
Are conscious;—may the like return no more!
May Discord—for a Seraph's care
Shall be attended with a bolder prayer—
May she, who once disturbed the seats of bliss
These mortal spheres above,
Be chained for ever to the black abyss.
And thou, O rescued Earth, by peace and love,
And merciful desires, thy sanctity approve!'
The Spirit ended his mysterious rite,
And the pure vision closed in darkness infinite.

ODE

> ———— Carmina possumus
> Donare, et pretium dicere muneri.
> Non incisa notis marmora publicis,
> Per quæ spiritus et vita redit bonis
> Post mortem ducibus
> ———— clarius indicant
> Laudes, quam ———— Pierides; neque,
> Si chartæ sileant quod bene feceris,
> Mercedem tuleris.——Hor. Car. 8, Lib. 4.

I

When the soft hand of sleep had closed the latch
On the tired household of corporeal sense,
And Fancy, keeping unreluctant watch,
Was free her choicest favours to dispense;
I saw, in wondrous pérspective displayed,
A landscape more august than happiest skill
Of pencil ever clothed with light and shade;
An intermingled pomp of vale and hill,
City, and naval stream, suburban grove,
And stately forest where the wild deer rove;
Nor wanted lurking hamlet, dusky towns,
And scattered rural farms of aspect bright;
And, here and there, between the pastoral downs,
The azure sea upswelled upon the sight.
Fair prospect, such as Britain only shows!
But not a living creature could be seen
Through its wide circuit, that, in deep repose,
And, even to sadness, lonely and serene,
Lay hushed; till—through a portal in the sky
Brighter than brightest loop-hole, in a storm,
Opening before the sun's triumphant eye—
Issued, to sudden view, a glorious Form!
Earthward it glided with a swift descent:
Saint George himself this Visitant must be;
And, ere a thought could ask on what intent
He sought the regions of Humanity,
A thrilling voice was heard, that vivified
City and field and flood;—aloud it cried—

"Though from my celestial home,
"Like a Champion, armed I come;
"On my helm the dragon crest,
"And the red cross on my breast;
"I, the Guardian of this Land,
"Speak not now of toilsome duty;
"Well obeyed was that command—
"Whence bright days of festive beauty;
"Haste, Virgins, haste!—the flowers which summer gave
"Have perished in the field;
"But the green thickets plenteously shall yield
"Fit garlands for the brave,
"That will be welcome, if by you entwined;
"Haste, Virgins, haste; and you, ye Matrons grave,
"Go forth with rival youthfulness of mind,
"And gather what ye find
"Of hardy laurel and wild holly boughs—
"To deck your stern Defenders' modest brows!
"Such simple gifts prepare,
"Though they have gained a worthier meed;
"And in due time shall share
"Those palms and amaranthine wreaths
"Unto their martyred Countrymen decreed,
"In realms where everlasting freshness breathes!"

II

And lo! with crimson banners proudly streaming,
And upright weapons innocently gleaming,
Along the surface of a spacious plain
Advance in order the redoubted Bands,
And there receive green chaplets from the hands
Of a fair female train—
Maids and Matrons, dight
In robes of dazzling white;
While from the crowd bursts forth a rapturous noise
By the cloud-capt hills retorted;
And a throng of rosy boys
In loose fashion tell their joys;
And grey-haired sires, on staffs supported,
Look round, and by their smiling seem to say,
Thus strives a grateful Country to display
The mighty debt which nothing can repay!

III

Anon before my sight a palace rose
Built of all precious substances,—so pure
And exquisite, that sleep alone bestows
Ability like splendour to endure:
Entered, with streaming thousands, through the gate,
I saw the banquet spread beneath a Dome of state,
A lofty Dome, that dared to emulate
The heaven of sable night
With starry lustre; yet had power to throw
Solemn effulgence, clear as solar light,
Upon a princely company below,
While the vault rang with choral harmony,
Like some Nymph-haunted grot beneath the roaring sea.
—No sooner ceased that peal, than on the verge
Of exultation hung a dirge
Breathed from a soft and lonely instrument,
That kindled recollections
Of agonised affections;
And, though some tears the strain attended,
The mournful passion ended
In peace of spirit, and sublime content!

IV

But garlands wither; festal shows depart,
Like dreams themselves; and sweetest sound—
(Albeit of effect profound)
It was—and it is gone!
Victorious England! bid the silent Art
Reflect, in glowing hues that shall not fade,
Those high achievements; even as she arrayed
With second life the deed of Marathon
Upon Athenian walls;
So may she labour for thy civic halls:
And be the guardian spaces
Of consecrated places,
As nobly graced by Sculpture's patient toil·
And let imperishable Columns rise
Fixed in the depths of this courageous soil;
Expressive signals of a glorious strife,
And competent to shed a spark divine
Into the torpid breast of daily life;—
Records on which, for pleasure of all eyes,
The morning sun may shine
With gratulation thoroughly benign!

V

And ye, Pierian Sisters, sprung from Jove
And sage Mnemosyne,—full long debarred
From your first mansions, exiled all too long
From many a hallowed stream and grove,
Dear native regions where ye wont to rove,
Chanting for patriot heroes the reward
Of never-dying song!
Now (for, though Truth descending from above
The Olympian summit hath destroyed for aye
Your kindred Deities, *Ye* live and move,
Spared for obeisance from perpetual love
For privilege redeemed of godlike sway)
Now, on the margin of some spotless fountain,
Or top serene of unmolested mountain,
Strike audibly the noblest of your lyres,
And for a moment meet the soul's desires!
That I, or some more favoured Bard, may hear
What ye, celestial Maids! have often sung
Of Britain's acts,—may catch it with rapt ear,
And give the treasure to our British tongue!
So shall the characters of that proud page
Support their mighty theme from age to age;
And, in the desert places of the earth,
When they to future empires have given birth,

So shall the people gather and believe
The bold report, transferred to every clime;
And the whole world, not envious but admiring,
And to the like aspiring,
Own—that the progeny of this fair Isle
Had power as lofty actions to achieve
As were performed in man's heroic prime;
Nor wanted, when their fortitude had held
Its even tenor, and the foe was quelled,
A corresponding virtue to beguile
The hostile purpose of wide-wasting Time—
That not in vain they laboured to secure,
For their great deeds, perpetual memory,
And fame as largely spread as land and sea,
By Works of spirit high and passion pure!
1816.

ODE

I

Who rises on the banks of Seine,
And binds her temples with the civic wreath?
What joy to read the promise of her mien!
How sweet to rest her wide-spread wings beneath
But they are ever playing,
And twinkling in the light,
And, if a breeze be straying,
That breeze she will invite;
And stands on tiptoe, conscious she is fair,
And calls a look of love into her face,
And spreads her arms, as if the general air
Alone could satisfy her wide embrace.
—Melt, Principalities, before her melt!
Her love ye hailed—her wrath have felt!
But She through many a change of form hath gone,
And stands amidst you now an armèd creature,
Whose panoply is not a thing put on,
But the live scales of a portentous nature;
That, having forced its way from birth to birth,
Stalks round—abhorred by Heaven, a terror to the Earth!

II

I marked the breathings of her dragon crest;
My Soul, a sorrowful interpreter,
In many a midnight vision bowed
Before the ominous aspect of her spear;
Whether the mighty beam, in scorn upheld,
Threatened her foes,—or, pompously at rest,
Seemed to bisect her orbèd shield,
As stretches a blue bar of solid cloud
Across the setting sun and all the fiery west.

III

So did she daunt the Earth, and God defy!
And, wheresoe'er she spread her sovereignty,
Pollution tainted all that was most pure.
—Have we not known—and live we not to tell—
That Justice seemed to hear her final knell?
Faith buried deeper in her own deep breast
Her stores, and sighed to find them insecure!
And Hope was maddened by the drops that fell
From shades, her chosen place of short-lived rest.
Shame followed shame, and woe supplanted woe—
Is this the only change that time can show?
How long shall vengeance sleep? Ye patien
Heavens, how long?
—Infirm ejaculation! from the tongue
Of Nations wanting virtue to be strong
Up to the measure of accorded might,
And daring not to feel the majesty of right!

IV

Weak Spirits are there—who would ask,
Upon the pressure of a painful thing,
The lion's sinews, or the eagle's wing;
Or let their wishes loose, in forest-glade,
Among the lurking powers
Of herbs and lowly flowers,
Or seek, from saints above, miraculous aid—
That Man may be accomplished for a task
Which his own nature hath enjoined;—and why?
If, when that interference hath relieved him,
He must sink down to languish
In worse than former helplessness—and lie
Till the caves roar,—and, imbecility
Again engendering anguish,
The same weak wish returns, that had before deceived him.

V

But Thou, supreme Disposer! may'st not speed
The course of things, and change the creed
Which hath been held aloft before men's sight
Since the first framing of societies,
Whether, as bards have told in ancient song,
Built up by soft seducing harmonies;
Or prest together by the appetite,
And by the power, of wrong.

1816.

THE FRENCH ARMY IN RUSSIA

1812-13

HUMANITY, delighting to behold
A fond reflection of her own decay,
Hath painted Winter like a traveller old,
Propped on a staff, and, through the sullen day,
In hooded mantle, limping o'er the plain,
As though his weakness were disturbed by pain:
Or, if a juster fancy should allow
An undisputed symbol of command,
The chosen sceptre is a withered bough,
Infirmly grasped within a palsied hand.
These emblems suit the helpless and forlorn;
But mighty Winter the device shall scorn.

For he it was—dread Winter! who beset,
Flinging round van and rear his ghastly net,
That host, when from the regions of the Pole
They shrunk, insane ambition's barren goal—
That host, as huge and strong as e'er defied
Their God, and placed their trust in human pride!
As fathers persecute rebellious sons,
He smote the blossoms of their warrior youth;
He called on Frost's inexorable tooth
Life to consume in Manhood's firmest hold;
Nor spared the reverend blood that feebly runs;
For why—unless for liberty enrolled
And sacred home—ah! why should hoary Age be bold?

Fleet the Tartar's reinless steed,
But fleeter far the pinions of the Wind,
Which from Siberian caves the Monarch freed,
And sent him forth, with squadrons of his kind,
And bade the Snow their ample backs bestride,
And to the battle ride.
No pitying voice commands a halt,
No courage can repel the dire assault;
Distracted spiritless, benumbed, and blind,
Whole legions sink—and, in one instant, find
Burial and death: look for them—and descry,
When morn returns, beneath the clear blue sky,
A soundless waste, a trackless vacancy!

1816.

ON THE SAME OCCASION

YE Storms, resound the praises of your King!
And ye mild Seasons—in a sunny clime,
Midway on some high hill, while father Time
Looks on delighted—meet in festal ring,
And loud and long of Winter's triumph sing!
Sing ye, with blossoms crowned, and fruits, and flowers,
Of Winter's breath surcharged with sleety showers,
And the dire flapping of his hoary wing!
Knit the blithe dance upon the soft green grass;
With feet, hands, eyes, looks, lips, report your gain;
Whisper it to the billows of the main,
And to the aërial zephyrs as they pass,
That old decrepit Winter—*He* hath slain
That Host, which rendered all your bounties vain!

1816.

"BY MOSCOW SELF-DEVOTED TO A BLAZE"

BY Moscow self-devoted to a blaze
Of dreadful sacrifice; by Russian blood
Lavished in fight with desperate hardihood;
The unfeeling Elements no claim shall raise
To rob our Human-nature of just praise

For what she did and suffered. Pledges sure
Of a deliverance absolute and pure
She gave, if Faith might tread the beaten ways
Of Providence. But now did the Most High
Exalt his still small voice;—to quell that Host
Gathered his power, a manifest ally;
He, whose heaped waves confounded the proud boast
Of Pharaoh, said to Famine, Snow, and Frost,
"Finish the strife by deadliest victory!"
1816.

THE GERMANS ON THE HEIGHTS OF HOCHHEIM

ABRUPTLY paused the strife;—the field throughout
Resting upon his arms each warrior stood,
Checked in the very act and deed of blood,
With breath suspended, like a listening scout.
O Silence! thou wert mother of a shout
That through the texture of yon azure dome
Cleaves its glad way, a cry of harvest home
Uttered to Heaven in ecstasy devout!
The barrier Rhine hath flashed, through battle-smoke,
On men who gaze heart-smitten by the view,
As if all Germany had felt the shock!
—Fly, wretched Gauls! ere they the charge renew
Who have seen—themselves now casting off the yoke—
The unconquerable Stream his course pursue.[1]
1816.

SIEGE OF VIENNA RAISED BY JOHN SOBIESKI

FEBRUARY 1816

OH, for a kindling touch from that pure flame
Which ministered, erewhile, to a sacrifice
Of gratitude, beneath Italian skies,
In words like these: 'Up, Voice of song! proclaim
'Thy saintly rapture with celestial aim:
'For lo! the Imperial City stands released
'From bondage threatened by the embattled East,
'And Christendom respires; from guilt and shame
'Redeemed, from miserable fear set free
'By one day's feat, one mighty victory.
'—Chant the Deliverer's praise in every tongue!
'The cross shall spread, the crescent hath waxed dim;
'He conquering, as in joyful Heaven is sung,
'HE CONQUERING THROUGH GOD, AND GOD BY HIM.'[2]

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

(The last six lines intended for an Inscription.)

FEBRUARY 1816

INTREPID sons of Albion! not by you
Is life despised; ah no, the spacious earth
Ne'er saw a race who held, by right of birth,
So many objects to which love is due:
Ye slight not life—to God and Nature true
But death, becoming death, is dearer far,
When duty bids you bleed in open war:
Hence hath your prowess quelled that impious crew.
Heroes!—for instant sacrifice prepared;
Yet filled with ardour and on triumph bent
'Mid direst shocks of mortal accident—
To you who fell, and you whom slaughter spared
To guard the fallen, and consummate the event,
Your Country rears this sacred Monument!

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

FEBRUARY 1816

THE Bard—whose soul is meek as dawning day,
Yet trained to judgments righteously severe,
Fervid, yet conversant with holy fear,

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[1] See Note.

[2] See Filicaia's ode.

As recognising one Almighty sway:
He—whose experienced eye can pierce the array
Of past events; to whom, in vision clear,
The aspiring heads of future things appear,
Like mountain-tops whose mists have rolled away—
Assoiled from all encumbrance of our time,[1]
He only, if such breathe, in strains devout
Shall comprehend this victory sublime;
Shall worthily rehearse the hideous rout,
The triumph hail, which from their peaceful clime
Angels might welcome with a choral shout!

"EMPERORS AND KINGS, HOW OFT HAVE TEMPLES RUNG"

Emperors and Kings, how oft have temples rung
With impious thanksgiving, the Almighty's scorn!
How oft above their altars have been hung
Trophies that led the good and wise to mourn
Triumphant wrong, battle of battle born,
And sorrow that to fruitless sorrow clung!
Now, from Heaven-sanctioned victory, Peace is sprung;
In this firm hour Salvation lifts her horn.
Glory to arms! But, conscious that the nerve
Of popular reason, long mistrusted, freed
Your thrones, ye Powers, from duty fear to swerve!
Be just, be grateful; nor, the oppressor's creed
Reviving, heavier chastisement deserve
Than ever forced unpitied hearts to bleed.
1816.

FEELINGS OF A FRENCH ROYALIST, ON THE DISINTERMENT OF THE REMAINS OF THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN

Dear Reliques! from a pit of vilest mould
Uprisen—to lodge among ancestral kings;
And to inflict shame's salutary stings
On the remorseless hearts of men grown old
In a blind worship; men perversely bold
Even to this hour,—yet, some shall now forsake
Their monstrous Idol if the dead e'er spake,
To warn the living; if truth were ever told
By aught redeemed out of the hollow grave:
O murdered Prince! meek, loyal, pious, brave!
The power of retribution once was given:
But 'tis a rueful thought that willow bands
So often tie the thunder-wielding hands
Of Justice sent to earth from highest Heaven!
1816.

TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE FIRST BOOK OF THE ÆNEID

To the Editors of the Philological Museum

Your letter, reminding me of an expectation I some time since held out to you of allowing some specimens of my translation from the Æneid to be printed in the Philological Museum, was not very acceptable; for I had abandoned the thought of ever sending into the world any part of that experiment—for it was nothing more—an experiment begun for amusement, and I now think a less fortunate one than when I first named it to you. Having been displeased in modern translations with the additions of incongruous matter, I began to translate with a resolve to keep clear of that fault, by adding nothing; but I became convinced that a spirited translation can scarcely be accomplished in the English language without admitting a principle of compensation. On this point, however, I do not wish to insist, and merely send the following passage, taken at random, from a wish to comply with your request. W. W.

But Cytherea, studious to invent
Arts yet untried, upon new counsels bent,
Resolves that Cupid, changed in form and face
To young Ascanius, should assume his place;
Present the maddening gifts, and kindle heat
Of passion at the bosom's inmost seat.
She dreads the treacherous house, the double tongue;
She burns, she frets—by Juno's rancour stung;
The calm of night is powerless to remove
These cares, and thus she speaks to wingèd Love:

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[1] "From all this world's encumbrance did himself assoil."—*Spenser.*

"O son, my strength, my power! who dost despise
(What, save thyself, none dares through earth and skies)
The giant-quelling bolts of Jove, I flee,
O son, a suppliant to thy deity!
What perils meet Æneas in his course,
How Juno's hate with unrelenting force
Pursues thy brother—this to thee is known;
And oft-times hast thou made my griefs thine own.
Him now the generous Dido by soft chains
Of bland entreaty at her court detains;
Junonian hospitalities prepare
Such apt occasion that I dread a snare.
Hence, ere some hostile God can intervene,
Would I, by previous wiles, inflame the queen
With passion for Æneas, such strong love
That at my beck, mine only, she shall move.
Hear, and assist;—the father's mandate calls
His young Ascanius to the Tyrian walls;
He comes, my dear delight,—and costliest things
Preserved from fire and flood for presents brings.
Him will I take, and in close covert keep,
'Mid groves Idalian, lulled to gentle sleep,
Or on Cythera's far-sequestered steep,
That he may neither know what hope is mine,
Nor by his presence traverse the design.
Do thou, but for a single night's brief space,
Dissemble; be that boy in form and face!
And when enraptured Dido shall receive
Thee to her arms, and kisses interweave
With many a fond embrace, while joy runs high,
And goblets crown the proud festivity,
Instil thy subtle poison, and inspire,
At every touch, an unsuspected fire."

Love, at the word, before his mother's sight
Puts off his wings, and walks, with proud delight,
Like young Iulus; but the gentlest dews
Of slumber Venus sheds, to circumfuse
The true Ascanius steeped in placid rest;
Then wafts him, cherished on her careful breast,
Through upper air to an Idalian glade,
Where he on soft *amaracus* is laid,
With breathing flowers embraced, and fragrant shade.
But Cupid, following cheerily his guide
Achates, with the gifts to Carthage hied;
And, as the hall he entered, there, between
The sharers of her golden couch, was seen
Reclined in festal pomp the Tyrian queen.
The Trojans, too (Æneas at their head),
On couches lie, with purple overspread:
Meantime in canisters is heaped the bread,
Pellucid water for the hands is borne,
And napkins of smooth texture, finely shorn.
Within are fifty handmaids, who prepare,
As they in order stand, the dainty fare;
And fume the household deities with store
Of odorous incense; while a hundred more
Matched with an equal number of like age,
But each of manly sex, a docile page,
Marshal the banquet, giving with due grace
To cup or viand its appointed place.
The Tyrians rushing in, an eager band,
Their painted couches seek, obedient to command.
They look with wonder on the gifts—they gaze
Upon Iulus, dazzled with the rays
That from his ardent countenance are flung,
And charmed to hear his simulating tongue;
Nor pass unpraised the robe and veil divine,
Round which the yellow flowers and wandering foliage twine.

But chiefly Dido, to the coming ill
Devoted, strives in vain her vast desires to fill;
She views the gifts; upon the child then turns
Insatiable looks, and gazing burns.
To ease a father's cheated love he hung
Upon Æneas, and around him clung;
Then seeks the queen; with her his arts he tries;
She fastens on the boy enamoured eyes,
Clasps in her arms, nor weens (O lot unblest!)
How great a God, incumbent o'er her breast,
Would fill it with his spirit. He, to please
His Acidalian mother, by degrees

Blots out Sichaeus, studious to remove
The dead, by influx of a living love,
By stealthy entrance of a perilous guest.
Troubling a heart that had been long at rest.

Now when the viands were withdrawn, and ceased
The first division of the splendid feast,
While round a vacant board the chiefs recline,
Huge goblets are brought forth; they crown the wine;
Voices of gladness roll the walls around;
Those gladsome voices from the courts rebound;
From gilded rafters many a blazing light
Depends, and torches overcome the night.
The minutes fly—till, at the queen's command,
A bowl of state is offered to her hand:
Then she, as Belus wont, and all the line
From Belus, filled it to the brim with wine;
Silence ensued. "O Jupiter, whose care
Is hospitable dealing, grant my prayer!
Productive day be this of lasting joy
To Tyrians, and these exiles driven from Troy;
A day to future generations dear!
Let Bacchus, donor of soul-quick'ning cheer,
Be present; kindly Juno, be thou near!
And, Tyrians, may your choicest favours wait
Upon this hour, the bond to celebrate!"
She spake and shed an offering on the board;
Then sipped the bowl whence she the wine had poured
And gave to Bitias, urging the prompt lord;
He raised the bowl, and took a long deep draught;
Then every chief in turn the beverage quaffed.

Graced with redundant hair, Iopas sings
The lore of Atlas, to resounding strings,
The labours of the Sun, the lunar wanderings;
When human kind, and brute; what natural powers
Engender lightning, whence are falling showers.
He haunts Arcturus,—that fraternal twain
The glittering Bears,—the Pleiads fraught with rain;
—Why suns in winter, shunning heaven's steep heights
Post seaward,—what impedes the tardy nights.
The learned song from Tyrian hearers draws
Loud shouts,—the Trojans echo the applause.
—But, lengthening out the night with converse new,
Large draughts of love unhappy Dido drew;
Of Priam asked, of Hector—o'er and o'er—
What arms the son of bright Aurora wore;—
What steeds the car of Diomed could boast;
Among the leaders of the Grecian host.
How looked Achilles, their dread paramount—
"But nay—the fatal wiles, O guest, recount,
Retrace the Grecian cunning from its source,
Your own grief and your friends?—your wandering course;
For now, till this seventh summer have ye ranged
The sea, or trod the earth, to peace estranged."

1816.

A FACT, AND AN IMAGINATION

OR,

CANUTE AND ALFRED, ON THE SEASHORE

The first and last fourteen lines of this poem each make a sonnet, and were composed as such; but I thought that by intermediate lines they might be connected so as to make a whole. One or two expressions are taken from Milton's *History of England.*

THE Danish Conqueror, on his royal chair,
Mustering a face of haughty sovereignty,
To aid a covert purpose, cried—"O ye
Approaching Waters of the deep, that share
With this green isle my fortunes, come not where
Your Master's throne is set."—Deaf was the Sea;

Her waves rolled on, respecting his decree
Less than they heed a breath of wanton air.
—Then Canute, rising from the invaded throne,
Said to his servile Courtiers,—"Poor the reach,
The undisguised extent, of mortal sway!
He only is a King, and he alone
Deserves the name (this truth the billows preach)
Whose everlasting laws, sea, earth, and heaven, obey."
This just reproof the prosperous Dane
Drew, from the influx of the main,
For some whose rugged northern mouths would strain
At oriental flattery;
And Canute (fact more worthy to be known)
From that time forth did for his brows disown
The ostentatious symbol of a crown;
Esteeming earthly royalty
Contemptible as vain.
Now hear what one of elder days,
Rich theme of England's fondest praise,
Her darling Alfred, *might* have spoken;
To cheer the remnant of his host
When he was driven from coast to coast,
Distressed and harassed, but with mind unbroken:
"My faithful followers, lo! the tide is spent
That rose, and steadily advanced to fill
The shores and channels, working Nature's will
Among the mazy streams that backward went,
And in the sluggish pools where ships are pent:
And now, his task performed, the flood stands still,
At the green base of many an inland hill,
In placid beauty and sublime content!
Such the repose that sage and hero find;
Such measured rest the sedulous and good
Of humbler name; whose souls do, like the flood
Of Ocean, press right on; or gently wind,
Neither to be diverted nor withstood,
Until they reach the bounds by Heaven assigned."

1816.

TO DORA

The complaint in my eyes which gave occasion to this address to my daughter first showed itself as a consequence of inflammation, caught at the top of Kirkstone, when I was over-heated by having carried up the ascent my eldest son, a lusty infant. Frequently has the disease recurred since, leaving my eyes in a state which has often prevented my reading for months, and makes me at this day incapable of bearing without injury any strong light by day or night. My acquaintance with books has therefore been far short of my wishes; and on this account, to acknowledge the services daily and hourly done me by my family and friends, this note is written.

"*A little onward lend thy guiding hand*
To these dark steps, a little further on!"
—What trick of memory to *my* voice hath brought
This mournful iteration? For though Time,
The Conqueror, crowns the Conquered, on this brow
Planting his favourite silver diadem,
Nor he, nor minister of his—intent
To run before him—hath enrolled me yet,
Though not unmenaced, among those who lean
Upon a living staff, with borrowed sight.
—O my own Dora, my belovèd child!
Should that day come—but hark! the birds salute
The cheerful dawn, brightening for me the east;
For me, thy natural leader, once again
Impatient to conduct thee, not as erst
A tottering infant, with compliant stoop
From flower to flower supported; but to curb
Thy nymph-like step swift-bounding o'er the lawn,
Along the loose rocks, or the slippery verge
Of foaming torrents.—From thy orisons
Come forth; and, while the morning air is yet
Transparent as the soul of innocent youth,
Let me, thy happy guide, now point thy way,
And now precede thee, winding to and fro,
Till we by perseverance gain the top
Of some smooth ridge, whose brink precipitous
Kindles intense desire for powers withheld

From this corporeal frame; whereon who stands,
Is seized with strong incitement to push forth
His arms, as swimmers use, and plunge—dread thought,
For pastime plunge—into the "abrupt abyss,"—
Where ravens spread their plumy vans, at ease!
And yet more gladly thee would I conduct
Through woods and spacious forests,—to behold
There, how the Original of human art,
Heaven-prompted Nature, measures and erects
Her temples, fearless for the stately work,
Though waves, to every breeze, its high-arched roof,
And storms the pillars rock. But we such schools
Of reverential awe will chiefly seek
In the still summer noon, while beams of light,
Reposing here, and in the aisles beyond
Traceably gliding through the dusk, recall
To mind the living presences of nuns;
A gentle, pensive, white-robed sisterhood,
Whose saintly radiance mitigates the gloom
Of those terrestrial fabrics, where they serve,
To Christ, the Sun of righteousness, espoused.
Now also shall the page of classic lore,
To these glad eyes from bondage freed, again
Lie open; and the book of Holy Writ,
Again unfolded, passage clear shall yield
To heights more glorious still, and into shades
More awful, where, advancing hand in hand,
We may be taught, O Darling of my care!
To calm the affections, elevate the soul,
And consecrate our lives to truth and love.
1816.

TO ———

ON HER FIRST ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF HELVELLYN

Written at Rydal Mount. The lady was Miss Blackett, then residing with Mr. Montagu Burgoyne at Fox-Ghyll. We were tempted to remain too long upon the mountain; and I, imprudently, with the hope of shortening the way, led her among the crags and down a steep slope which entangled us in difficulties that were met by her with much spirit and courage.

INMATE of a mountain-dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn;
Awed, delighted, and amazed!

Potent was the spell that bound thee
Not unwilling to obey;
For blue Ether's arms, flung round thee,
Stilled the pantings of dismay.

Lo! the dwindled woods and meadows;
What a vast abyss is there!
Lo! the clouds, the solemn shadows,
And the glistenings—heavenly fair!

And a record of commotion
Which a thousand ridges yield;
Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean
Gleaming like a silver shield!

Maiden! now take flight;—inherit
Alps or Andes—they are thine!
With the morning's roseate Spirit,
Sweep their length of snowy line;

Or survey their bright dominions
In the gorgeous colours drest
Flung from off the purple pinions,
Evening spreads throughout the west!

Thine are all the coral fountains
Warbling in each sparry vault
Of the untrodden lunar mountains;
Listen to their songs!—or halt,

To Niphates' top invited,
Whither spiteful Satan steered;
Or descend where the ark alighted,
When the green earth re-appeared;

For the power of hills is on thee,
As was witnessed through thine eye
Then, when old Helvellyn won thee
To confess their majesty!
1816.

VERNAL ODE

Composed at Rydal Mount, to place in view the immortality of succession where immortality is denied, as far as we know, to the individual creature.

Rerum Natura tota est nusquam magis quam in minimis.—PLIN. *Nat. Hist.*

I

BENEATH the concave of an April sky,
When all the fields with freshest green were dight,
Appeared, in presence of the spiritual eye
That aids or supersedes our grosser sight,
The form and rich habiliments of One
Whose countenance bore resemblance to the sun,
When it reveals, in evening majesty,
Features half lost amid their own pure light.
Poised like a weary cloud, in middle air
He hung,—then floated with angelic ease
(Softening that bright effulgence by degrees)
Till he had reached a summit sharp and bare,
Where oft the venturous heifer drinks the noontide breeze.
Upon the apex of that lofty cone
Alighted, there the Stranger stood alone;
Fair as a gorgeous Fabric of the east
Suddenly raised by some enchanter's power,
Where nothing was; and firm as some old Tower
Of Britain's realm, whose leafy crest
Waves high, embellished by a gleaming shower!

II

Beneath the shadow of his purple wings
Rested a golden harp;—he touched the strings;
And, after prelude of unearthly sound
Poured through the echoing hills around,
He sang—
"No wintry desolations,
Scorching blight or noxious dew,
Affect my native habitations;
Buried in glory, far beyond the scope
Of man's inquiring gaze, but to his hope
Imaged, though faintly, in the hue
Profound of night's ethereal blue;
And in the aspect of each radiant orb;—
Some fixed, some wandering with no timid curb;
But wandering star and fixed, to mortal eye,
Blended in absolute serenity,
And free from semblance of decline;—
Fresh as if Evening brought their natal hour,
Her darkness splendour gave, her silence power
To testify of Love and Grace divine.

III

"What if those bright fires
Shine subject to decay,
Sons haply of extinguished sires,
Themselves to lose their light, or pass away
Like clouds before the wind,
Be thanks poured out to Him whose hand bestows,
Nightly, on human kind
That vision of endurance and repose.
—And though to every draught of vital breath
Renewed throughout the bounds of earth or ocean,
The melancholy gates of Death
Respond with sympathetic motion;
Though all that feeds on nether air,
Howe'er magnificent or fair,
Grows but to perish, and entrust
Its ruins to their kindred dust;
Yet, by the Almighty's ever-during care,
Her procreant vigils Nature keeps
Amid the unfathomable deeps;
And saves the peopled fields of earth
From dread of emptiness or dearth.
Thus, in their stations, lifting tow'rd the sky
The foliaged head in cloud-like majesty,
The shadow-casting race of trees survive:
Thus, in the train of Spring, arrive
Sweet flowers;—what living eye hath viewed
Their myriads?—endlessly renewed,
Wherever strikes the sun's glad ray;
Where'er the subtle waters stray;
Wherever sportive breezes bend
Their course, or genial showers descend!
Mortals, rejoice! the very Angels quit
Their mansions unsusceptible of change,
Amid your pleasant bowers to sit,
And through your sweet vicissitudes to range!"

IV

Oh, nursed at happy distance from the cares
Of a too-anxious world, mild pastoral Muse!

That, to the sparkling crown Urania wears,
And to her sister Clio's laurel wreath,
Prefer'st a garland culled from purple heath,
Or blooming thicket moist with morning dews;
Was such bright Spectacle vouchsafed to me?
And was it granted to the simple ear
Of thy contented Votary
Such melody to hear!
Him rather suits it, side by side with thee,
Wrapped in a fit of pleasing indolence,
While thy tired lute hangs on the hawthorn-tree,
To lie and listen—till o'er-drowsèd sense
Sinks, hardly conscious of the influence—
To the soft murmur of the vagrant Bee.
—A slender sound! yet hoary Time
Doth to the *Soul* exalt it with the chime
Of all his years;—a company
Of ages coming, ages gone;
(Nations from before them sweeping,
Regions in destruction steeping,)
But every awful note in unison
With that faint utterance, which tells
Of treasure sucked from buds and bells,
For the pure keeping of those waxen cells;
Where She—a statist prudent to confer
Upon the common weal; a warrior bold,
Radiant all over with unburnished gold,
And armed with living spear for mortal fight;
A cunning forager
That spreads no waste; a social builder; one
In whom all busy offices unite
With all fine functions that afford delight—
Safe through the winter storm in quiet dwells!

V

And is She brought within the power
Of vision?—o'er this tempting flower
Hovering until the petals stay
Her flight, and take its voice away!—
Observe each wing!—a tiny van!
The structure of her laden thigh,
How fragile! yet of ancestry
Mysteriously remote and high;
High as the imperial front of man;
The roseate bloom on woman's cheek;
The soaring eagle's curvèd beak;
The white plumes of the floating swan;
Old as the tiger's paw, the lion's mane
Ere shaken by that mood of stern disdain
At which the desert trembles.—Humming Bee!
Thy sting was needless then, perchance unknown,
The seeds of malice were not sown;
All creatures met in peace, from fierceness free,
And no pride blended with their dignity.
—Tears had not broken from their source;
Nor Anguish strayed from her Tartarean den;
The golden years maintained a course
Not undiversified though smooth and even;
We were not mocked with glimpse and shadow then,
Bright Seraphs mixed familiarly with men;
And earth and stars composed a universal heaven! 1817.

ODE TO LYCORIS. May 1817

The discerning reader, who is aware that in the poem of Ellen Irwin I was desirous of throwing the reader at once out of the old ballad, so as, if possible, to preclude a comparison between that mode of dealing with the subject and the mode I meant to adopt—may here perhaps perceive that this poem originated in the four last lines of the first stanza. Those specks of snow, reflected in the lake and so transferred, as it were, to the subaqueous sky, reminded me of the swans which the fancy of the ancient classic poets yoked to the car of Venus. Hence the tenor of the whole first stanza, and the name of Lycoris, which—with some readers who think my theology and classical allusion too far-fetched and therefore more or less unnatural and affected—will tend to unrealise the sentiment that pervades these verses. But surely one who has written so much in verse as I have done may be allowed to retrace his steps in the regions of fancy which delighted him in his boyhood, when he first became acquainted with the Greek and Roman Poets. Before I read Virgil I was so strongly attached to Ovid, whose Metamorphoses I read at school, that I was quite in a passion whenever I found him, in books of criticism, placed below Virgil. As to Homer, I was never weary of travelling over the scenes through which he led me. Classical literature affected me by its own beauty. But the truths of scripture having been entrusted to the dead languages, and these fountains having been recently laid open at the Reformation, an importance and a sanctity were at that period attached to classical literature that extended, as is obvious in Milton's Lycidas, for example, both to its spirit and form in a degree that can never be revived. No doubt the hackneyed and lifeless use into which mythology fell towards the close of the 17th century, and which continued through the 18th, disgusted the general reader with all allusion to it in modern verse; and though, in deference to this disgust, and also in a measure participating in it, I abstained in my earlier writings from all introduction of pagan fable, surely, even in its humble form, it may ally itself with real sentiment, as I can truly affirm it did in the present case.

I

An age hath been when Earth was proud
Of lustre too intense
To be sustained; and Mortals bowed
The front in self-defence.
Who *then*, if Dian's crescent gleamed,
Or Cupid's sparkling arrow streamed
While on the wing the Urchin played,
Could fearlessly approach the shade?
—Enough for one soft vernal day,
If I, a bard of ebbing time,
And nurtured in a fickle clime,
May haunt this hornèd bay;
Whose amorous water multiplies
The flitting halcyon's vivid dyes;
And smooths her liquid breast—to show
These swan-like specks of mountain snow,
White as the pair that slid along the plains
Of heaven, when Venus held the reins!

II

In youth we love the darksome lawn
Brushed by the owlet's wing;
Then, Twilight is preferred to Dawn,
And Autumn to the Spring.
Sad fancies do we then affect,
In luxury of disrespect
To our own prodigal excess
Of too familiar happiness.
Lycoris (if such name befit
Thee, thee my life's celestial sign!)
When Nature marks the year's decline,
Be ours to welcome it;
Pleased with the harvest hope that runs
Before the path of milder suns;
Pleased while the sylvan world displays
Its ripeness to the feeding gaze;
Pleased when the sullen winds resound the knell
Of the resplendent miracle.

III

But something whispers to my heart
That, as we downward tend,
Lycoris! life requires an *art*
To which our souls must bend;
A skill—to balance and supply;
And, ere the flowing fount be dry,
As soon it must, a sense to sip,
Or drink, with no fastidious lip.
Then welcome, above all, the Guest
Whose smiles, diffused o'er land and sea,
Seem to recall the Deity
Of youth into the breast:
May pensive Autumn ne'er present
A claim to her disparagement!
While blossoms and the budding spray
Inspire us in our own decay;
Still, as we nearer draw to life's dark goal,
Be hopeful Spring the favourite of the Soul!

TO THE SAME

This as well as the preceding and the two that follow were composed in front of Rydal Mount and during my walks in the neighbourhood. Nine-tenths of my verses have been murmured out in the open air: and here let me repeat what I believe has already appeared in print. One day a stranger having walked round the garden and grounds of Rydal Mount asked one of the female servants, who happened to be at the door, permission to see her master's study. "This," said she, leading him forward, "is my master's library where he keeps his books, but his study is out of doors." After a long absence from home it has more than once happened that some one of my cottage neighbours has said—"Well, there he is; we are glad to hear him *booing* about again." Once more, in excuse for so much egotism, let me say, these notes are written for my familiar friends, and at their earnest request. Another time a gentleman whom James had conducted through the grounds asked him what kind of plants throve best there: after a little consideration he answered —"Laurels." "That is," said the stranger, "as it should be; don't you know that the laurel is the emblem of poetry, and that poets used on public occasions to be crowned with it?" James stared when the question was first put, but was doubtless much pleased with the information.

Enough of climbing toil!—Ambition treads
Here, as 'mid busier scenes, ground steep and rough,
Or slippery even to peril! and each step,

As we for most uncertain recompence
Mount toward the empire of the fickle clouds,
Each weary step, dwarfing the world below,
Induces, for its old familiar sights,
Unacceptable feelings of contempt,
With wonder mixed—that Man could e'er be tied,
In anxious bondage, to such nice array
And formal fellowship of petty things!
—Oh! 'tis the *heart* that magnifies this life,
Making a truth and beauty of her own;
And moss-grown alleys, circumscribing shades,
And gurgling rills, assist her in the work
More efficaciously than realms outspread,
As in a map, before the adventurer's gaze—
Ocean and Earth contending for regard.
The umbrageous woods are left—how far beneath!
But lo! where darkness seems to guard the mouth
Of yon wild cave, whose jaggèd brows are fringed
With flaccid threads of ivy, in the still
And sultry air, depending motionless.
Yet cool the space within, and not uncheered
(As whoso enters shall ere long perceive)
By stealthy influx of the timid day
Mingling with night, such twilight to compose
As Numa loved; when, in the Egerian grot,
From the sage Nymph appearing at his wish,
He gained whate'er a regal mind might ask,
Or need, of counsel breathed through lips divine.
Long as the heat shall rage, let that dim cave
Protect us, there deciphering as we may
Diluvian records; or the sighs of Earth
Interpreting; or counting for old Time
His minutes, by reiterated drops,
Audible tears, from some invisible source
That deepens upon fancy—more and more
Drawn toward the centre whence those sighs creep forth
To awe the lightness of humanity:
Or, shutting up thyself within thyself,
There let me see thee sink into a mood
Of gentler thought, protracted till thine eye
Be calm as water when the winds are gone,
And no one can tell whither. Dearest Friend!
We two have known such happy hours together
That, were power granted to replace them (fetched
From out the pensive shadows where they lie)
In the first warmth of their original sunshine,
Loth should I be to use it: passing sweet
Are the domains of tender memory!

1817.

THE LONGEST DAY

ADDRESSED TO MY DAUGHTER

Suggested by the sight of my daughter (Dora) playing in front of Rydal Mount; and composed in a great measure the same afternoon. I have often wished to pair this poem upon the *longest* with one upon the *shortest*, day, and regret even now that it has not been done.

LET us quit the leafy arbour,
And the torrent murmuring by;
For the sun is in his harbour,
Weary of the open sky.

Evening now unbinds the fetters
Fashioned by the glowing light;
All that breathe are thankful debtors
To the harbinger of night.

Yet by some grave thoughts attended
Eve renews her calm career:
For the day that now is ended,
Is the longest of the year.

Dora! sport, as now thou sportest,
On this platform, light and free;
Take thy bliss, while longest, shortest,
Are indifferent to thee!

Who would check the happy feeling
That inspires the linnet's song?
Who would stop the swallow, wheeling
On her pinions swift and strong?

Yet at this impressive season,
Words which tenderness can speak
From the truths of homely reason,
Might exalt the loveliest cheek;

And, while shades to shades succeeding
Steal the landscape from the sight,
I would urge this moral pleading,
Last forerunner of "Good night!"

SUMMER ebbs;—each day that follows
Is a reflux from on high,
Tending to the darksome hollows
Where the frosts of winter lie.

He who governs the creation,
In his providence, assigned
Such a gradual declination
To the life of human kind.

Yet we mark it not;—fruits redden,
Fresh flowers blow, as flowers have blown,
And the heart is loth to deaden
Hopes that she so long hath known.

Be thou wiser, youthful Maiden!
And when thy decline shall come,
Let not flowers, or boughs fruit-laden,
Hide the knowledge of thy doom.

Now, even now, ere wrapped in slumber,
Fix thine eyes upon the sea
That absorbs time, space, and number;
Look thou to Eternity!

Follow thou the flowing river
On whose breast are thither borne
All deceived, and each deceiver,
Through the gates of night and morn;

Through the year's successive portals;
Through the bounds which many a star
Marks, not mindless of frail mortals
When his light returns from far.

Thus when thou with Time hast travelled
Toward the mighty gulf of things,
And the mazy stream unravelled
With thy best imaginings;

Think, if thou on beauty leanest,
Think how pitiful that stay,
Did not virtue give the meanest
Charms superior to decay.

Duty, like a strict preceptor,
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown;
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,
While youth's roses are thy crown.

Grasp it,—if thou shrink and tremble,
Fairest damsel of the green,
Thou wilt lack the only symbol
That proclaims a genuine queen;

And ensures those palms of honour
Which selected spirits wear,
Bending low before the Donor,
Lord of heaven's unchanging year!

1817.

HINT FROM THE MOUNTAINS

FOR CERTAIN POLITICAL PRETENDERS

Bunches of fern may often be seen wheeling about in the wind as here described. The particular bunch that suggested these verses was noticed in the Pass of Dunmail Raise. The verses were composed in 1817, but the application is for all times and places.

"WHO but hails the sight with pleasure
When the wings of genius rise,
Their ability to measure
With great enterprise;
But in man was ne'er such daring
As yon Hawk exhibits, pairing
His brave spirit with the war in
The stormy skies!

"Mark him, how his power he uses,
Lays it by, at will resumes!
Mark, ere for his haunt he chooses
Clouds and utter glooms!
There, he wheels in downward mazes;
Sunward now his flight he raises,
Catches fire, as seems, and blazes
With uninjured plumes!"—

ANSWER

"Stranger, 'tis no act of courage
Which aloft thou dost discern;
No bold *bird* gone forth to forage
'Mid the tempest stern;
But such mockery as the nations
See, when public perturbations
Lift men from their native stations
Like yon TUFT OF FERN;

"Such it is; the aspiring creature
Soaring on undaunted wing,
(So you fancied) is by nature
A dull helpless thing,
Dry and withered, light and yellow;—
That to be the tempest's fellow!
Wait—and you shall see how hollow
Its endeavouring!" 1817.

THE PASS OF KIRKSTONE

Written at Rydal Mount. Thoughts and feelings of many walks in all weathers, by day and night, over this Pass, alone and with beloved friends.

I

WITHIN the mind strong fancies work.
A deep delight the bosom thrills
Oft as I pass along the fork
Of these fraternal hills:
Where, save the rugged road, we find
No appanage of human kind,
Nor hint of man; if stone or rock
Seem not his handywork to mock
By something cognizably shaped;
Mockery—or model roughly hewn,
And left as if by earthquake strewn,
Or from the Flood escaped:
Altars for Druid service fit;
(But where no fire was ever lit,
Unless the glow-worm to the skies
Thence offer nightly sacrifice)
Wrinkled Egyptian monument;
Green moss-grown tower; or hoary tent;
Tents of a camp that never shall be razed—
On which four thousand years have gazed!

II

Ye plough-shares sparkling on the slopes!
Ye snow-white lambs that trip
Imprisoned 'mid the formal props
Of restless ownership!
Ye trees, that may to-morrow fall
To feed the insatiate Prodigal!
Lawns, houses, chattels, groves, and fields,
All that the fertile valley shields;
Wages of folly—baits of crime,
Of life's uneasy game the stake,
Playthings that keep the eyes awake
Of drowsy, dotard Time;—
O care! O guilt!—O vales and plains,
Here, 'mid his own unvexed domains,
A Genius dwells, that can subdue
At once all memory of You,—
Most potent when mists veil the sky,
Mists that distort and magnify;
While the coarse rushes, to the sweeping breeze,
Sigh forth their ancient melodies!

III

List to those shriller notes!—*that* march
Perchance was on the blast,
When, through this Height's inverted arch,
Rome's earliest legion passed!
—They saw, adventurously impelled,
And older eyes than theirs beheld,
This block—and yon, whose church-like frame
Gives to this savage Pass its name.
Aspiring Road! that lov'st to hide
Thy daring in a vapoury bourn,
Not seldom may the hour return
When thou shalt be my guide:
And I (as all men may find cause,
When life is at a weary pause,
And they have panted up the hill
Of duty with reluctant will)
Be thankful, even though tired and faint,
For the rich bounties of constraint;
Whence oft invigorating transports flow
That choice lacked courage to bestow!

IV

My Soul was grateful for delight
That wore a threatening brow;
A veil is lifted—can she slight
The scene that opens now?
Though habitation none appear,
The greenness tells, man must be there;
The shelter—that the pérspective
Is of the clime in which we live;
Where Toil pursues his daily round;
Where Pity sheds sweet tears—and Love,
In woodbine bower or birchen grove,
Inflicts his tender wound.
—Who comes not hither ne'er shall know
How beautiful the world below;
Nor can he guess how lightly leaps
The brook adown the rocky steeps.
Farewell, thou desolate Domain!
Hope, pointing to the cultured plain,
Carols like a shepherd-boy;
And who is she?—Can that be Joy!
Who, with a sunbeam for her guide,

Smoothly skims the meadows wide;
While Faith, from yonder opening cloud,
To hill and vale proclaims aloud,
"Whate'er the weak may dread, the wicked dare,
Thy lot, O Man, is good, thy portion, fair!"
1817.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

ON THE EVE OF A NEW YEAR

This arose out of a flash of moonlight that struck the ground when I was approaching the steps that lead from the garden at Rydal Mount to the front of the house. "From her sunk eye a stagnant tear stole forth" is taken, with some loss, from a discarded poem, "The Convict," in which occurred, when he was discovered lying in the cell, these lines:—

"But now he upraises the deep-sunken eye,
The motion unsettles a tear;
The silence of sorrow it seems to supply
And asks of me—why I am here."

I

Smile of the Moon!—for so I name
That silent greeting from above;
A gentle flash of light that came
From her whom drooping captives love;
Or art thou of still higher birth?
Thou that didst part the clouds of earth,
My torpor to reprove!

II

Bright boon of pitying Heaven!—alas,
I may not trust thy placid cheer!
Pondering that Time to-night will pass
The threshold of another year;
For years to me are sad and dull;
My very moments are too full
Of hopelessness and fear.

III

And yet, the soul-awakening gleam,
That struck perchance the farthest cone
Of Scotland's rocky wilds, did seem
To visit me, and me alone;
Me, unapproached by any friend,
Save those who to my sorrows lend
Tears due unto their own.

IV

To-night the church-tower bells will ring
Through these wild realms a festive peal;
To the new year a welcoming;
A tuneful offering for the weal
Of happy millions lulled in sleep;
While I am forced to watch and weep,
By wounds that may not heal.

V

Born all too high, by wedlock raised
Still higher—to be cast thus low!
Would that mine eyes had never gazed
On aught of more ambitious show
Than the sweet flowerets of the fields
—It is my royal state that yields
This bitterness of woe.

VI

Yet how?—for I, if there be truth
In the world's voice, was passing fair;
And beauty, for confiding youth,
Those shocks of passion can prepare
That kill the bloom before its time;
And blanch, without the owner's crime,
The most resplendent hair.

VII

Unblest distinction! showered on me
To bind a lingering life in chains:
All that could quit my grasp, or flee,
Is gone;—but not the subtle stains
Fixed in the spirit; for even here
Can I be proud that jealous fear
Of what I was remains.

VIII

A Woman rules my prison's key;
A sister Queen, against the bent
Of law and holiest sympathy,
Detains me, doubtful of the event;
Great God, who feel'st for my distress,
My thoughts are all that I possess,
O keep them innocent!

IX

Farewell desire of human aid,
Which abject mortals vainly court!
By friends deceived, by foes betrayed,
Of fears the prey, of hopes the sport;
Nought but the world-redeeming Cross
Is able to supply my loss,
My burthen to support.

X

Hark! the death-note of the year
Sounded by the castle-clock!
From her sunk eyes a stagnant tear
Stole forth, unsettled by the shock;
But oft the woods renewed their green,
Ere the tired head of Scotland's Queen
Reposed upon the block! 1817.

SEQUEL TO THE "BEGGARS," 1802

COMPOSED MANY YEARS AFTER

WHERE are they now, those wanton Boys?
For whose free range the dædal earth
Was filled with animated toys,
And implements of frolic mirth;
With tools for ready wit to guide;
And ornaments of seemlier pride,
More fresh, more bright, than princes wear;
For what one moment flung aside,
Another could repair;
What good or evil have they seen
Since I their pastime witnessed here,
Their daring wiles, their sportive cheer?
I ask—but all is dark between!
They met me in a genial hour,
When universal nature breathed
As with the breath of one sweet flower,—
A time to overrule the power
Of discontent, and check the birth
Of thoughts with better thoughts at strife,
The most familiar bane of life
Since parting Innocence bequeathed
Mortality to Earth!
Soft clouds, the whitest of the year,
Sailed through the sky—the brooks ran clear;
The lambs from rock to rock were bounding;
With songs the budded groves resounding;
And to my heart are still endeared
The thoughts with which it then was cheered;
The faith which saw that gladsome pair
Walk through the fire with unsinged hair.
Or, if such faith must needs deceive—
Then, Spirits of beauty and of grace,
Associates in that eager chase;
Ye, who within the blameless mind
Your favourite seat of empire find—
Kind Spirits! may we not believe
That they, so happy and so fair
Through your sweet influence, and the care
Of pitying Heaven, at least were free
From touch of *deadly* injury?
Destined whate'er their earthly doom,
For mercy and immortal bloom!
1817.

THE PILGRIM'S DREAM

OR, THE STAR AND THE GLOW-WORM

I distinctly recollect the evening when these verses were suggested in 1818. It was on the road between Rydal and Grasmere, where Glow-worms abound. A Star was shining above the ridge of Loughrigg Fell, just opposite. I remember a critic, in some review or other, crying out against this piece. "What so monstrous," said he, "as to make a star talk to a glow-worm!" Poor fellow! we know from this sage observation what the "primrose on the river's brim was to him."

A PILGRIM, when the summer day
Had closed upon his weary way,
A lodging begged beneath a castle's roof;
But him the haughty Warder spurned;
And from the gate the Pilgrim turned,
To seek such covert as the field
Or heath-besprinkled copse might yield,
Or lofty wood, shower-proof.

He paced along; and, pensively,
Halting beneath a shady tree,
Whose moss-grown root might serve for couch or seat,
Fixed on a Star his upward eye;
Then, from the tenant of the sky
He turned, and watched with kindred look,
A Glow-worm, in a dusky nook,
Apparent at his feet.

The murmur of a neighbouring stream
Induced a soft and slumbrous dream,
A pregnant dream, within whose shadowy bounds
He recognised the earth-born Star,
And *That* which glittered from afar;
And (strange to witness!) from the frame
Of the ethereal Orb, there came
Intelligible sounds.

Much did it taunt the humble Light
That now, when day was fled, and night
Hushed the dark earth, fast closing weary eyes,

A very reptile could presume
To show her taper in the gloom,
As if in rivalship with One
Who sate a ruler on his throne
Erected in the skies.

"Exalted Star!" the Worm replied,
"Abate this unbecoming pride,
Or with a less uneasy lustre shine;
Thou shrink'st as momently thy rays
Are mastered by the breathing haze;
While neither mist, nor thickest cloud
That shapes in heaven its murky shroud,
Hath power to injure mine.

But not for this do I aspire
To match the spark of local fire,
That at my will burns on the dewy lawn,
With thy acknowledged glories;—No!
Yet, thus upbraided, I may show
What favours do attend me here,
Till, like thyself, I disappear
Before the purple dawn."

When this in modest guise was said,
Across the welkin seemed to spread
A boding sound—for aught but sleep unfit!
Hills quaked, the rivers backward ran;
That Star, so proud of late, looked wan;
And reeled with visionary stir
In the blue depth, like Lucifer
Cast headlong to the pit!

Fire raged: and, when the spangled floor
Of ancient ether was no more,
New heavens succeeded, by the dream brought forth:
And all the happy Souls that rode
Transfigured through that fresh abode,
Had heretofore, in humble trust,
Shone meekly 'mid their native dust,
The Glow-worms of the earth!

This knowledge, from an Angel's voice
Proceeding, made the heart rejoice
Of Him who slept upon the open lea:
Waking at morn he murmured not;
And, till life's journey closed, the spot
Was to the Pilgrim's soul endeared,
Where by that dream he had been cheered
Beneath the shady tree. 1818.

INSCRIPTIONS

SUPPOSED TO BE FOUND IN AND NEAR A HERMIT'S CELL

1818

I

Hopes what are they?—Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass;
Or a spider's web adorning
In a strait and treacherous pass.

What are fears but voices airy?
Whispering harm where harm is not;
And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bolt is shot!

What is glory?—in the socket
See how dying tapers fare!
What is pride?—a whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star.

What is friendship?—do not trust her,
Nor the vows which she has made;
Diamonds dart their brightest lustre
From a palsy-shaken head.

What is truth?—a staff rejected;
Duty?—an unwelcome clog;
Joy?—a moon by fits reflected
In a swamp or watery bog;

Bright, as if through ether steering,
To the Traveller's eye it shone:
He hath hailed it re-appearing—
And as quickly it is gone;

Such is Joy—as quickly hidden,
Or mis-shapen to the sight,
And by sullen weeds forbidden
To resume its native light.

What is youth?—a dancing billow,
(Winds behind, and rocks before!)
Age?—a drooping, tottering willow
On a flat and lazy shore.

What is peace?—when pain is over,
And love ceases to rebel,
Let the last faint sigh discover
That precedes the passing knell!

II

INSCRIBED UPON A ROCK

The monument of ice here spoken of I observed while ascending the middle road of the three ways that lead from Rydal to Grasmere. It was on my right hand, and my eyes were upon it when it fell, as told in these lines.

Pause, Traveller! whosoe'er thou be
Whom chance may lead to this retreat,
Where silence yields reluctantly
Even to the fleecy straggler's bleat;

Give voice to what my hand shall trace,
And fear not lest an idle sound
Of words unsuited to the place
Disturb its solitude profound.

I saw this Rock, while vernal air
Blew softly o'er the russet heath,
Uphold a Monument as fair
As church or abbey furnisheth.

Unsullied did it meet the day,
Like marble, white, like ether, pure;
As if, beneath, some hero lay,
Honoured with costliest sepulture.

My fancy kindled as I gazed;
And, ever as the sun shone forth,
The flattered structure glistened, blazed,
And seemed the proudest thing on earth.

But frost had reared the gorgeous Pile
Unsound as those which Fortune builds—
To undermine with secret guile,
Sapped by the very beam that gilds.

And, while I gazed, with sudden shock
Fell the whole Fabric to the ground;
And naked left this dripping Rock,
With shapeless ruin spread around!

III

Where the second quarry now is, as you pass from Rydal to Grasmere, there was formerly a length of smooth rock that sloped towards the road, on the right hand. I used to call it Tadpole Slope, from having frequently observed there the water-bubbles gliding under the ice, exactly in the shape of that creature.

Hast thou seen, with flash incessant,
Bubbles gliding under ice,
Bodied forth and evanescent,
No one knows by what device?

Such are thoughts!—A wind-swept meadow
Mimicking a troubled sea,
Such is life; and death a shadow
From the rock eternity!

IV

NEAR THE SPRING OF THE HERMITAGE

Troubled long with warring notions
Long impatient of thy rod,
I resign my soul's emotions
Unto Thee, mysterious God!

What avails the kindly shelter
Yielded by this craggy rent,
If my spirit toss and welter
On the waves of discontent?

Parching Summer hath no warrant
To consume this crystal Well;
Rains, that make each rill a torrent,
Neither sully it nor swell.

Thus, dishonouring not her station,
Would my Life present to Thee,
Gracious God, the pure oblation
Of divine tranquillity!

V

Not seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the Morn;
Not seldom Evening in the west
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove,
To the confiding Bark, untrue;
And, if she trust the stars above,
They can be treacherous too.

The umbrageous Oak, in pomp outspread
Full oft, when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightning down upon the head
It promised to defend.

But Thou art true, incarnate Lord,
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die;
Thy smile is sure, thy plighted word
No change can falsify!

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace on suppliant knee;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstasy!

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY SPLENDOUR AND BEAUTY

Felt and in a great measure composed upon the little mount in front of our abode at Rydal. In concluding my notices of this class of poems it may be as well to observe that among the "Miscellaneous Sonnets" are a few alluding to morning impressions which might be read with mutual benefit in connection with these "Evening Voluntaries." See, for example, that one on Westminster Bridge, that composed on a May morning, the one on the song of the Thrush, and that beginning—"While beams of orient light shoot wide and high."

I

HAD this effulgence disappeared
With flying haste, I might have sent,
Among the speechless clouds, a look
Of blank astonishment;
But 'tis endued with power to stay,
And sanctify one closing day,
That frail Mortality may see—
What is?—ah no, but what *can* be!
Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vespers in the grove;
Or, crowning, star-like, each some sovereign height,
Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both.—Such holy rite,
Methinks, if audibly repeated now
From hill or valley, could not move
Sublimer transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle—the gleam—
The shadow—and the peace supreme!

II

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues,
Whate'er it strikes, with gem-like hues!
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain side;
And glistening antlers are descried;
And gilded flocks appear.
Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve!
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine!
—From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread!

III

And, if there be whom broken ties
Afflict, or injuries assail,
Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop—no record hath told where!
And tempting Fancy to ascend,
And with immortal Spirits blend![1]
—Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heavenward raise
Their practicable way.
Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad,
And see to what fair countries ye are bound!
And if some traveller, weary of his road,
Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
Ye Genii! to his covert speed;
And wake him with such gentle heed
As may attune his soul to meet the dower
Bestowed on this transcendent hour!

IV

Such hues from their celestial Urn
Were wont to stream before mine eye,
Where'er it wandered in the morn
Of blissful infancy.

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[1] See Note.

This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
For, if a vestige of those gleams
Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
Dread Power! whom peace and calmness serve
No less than Nature's threatening voice,
If aught unworthy be my choice,
From THEE if I would swerve;
Oh, let thy grace remind me of the light
Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
Appears to shine, by miracle restored;
My soul, though yet confined to earth,
Rejoices in a second birth!
—'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;
And night approaches with her shades.
1818.

NOTE.—The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described at the commencement of the third Stanza of this Ode, as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapours, or sunny haze;—in the present instance by the latter cause. Allusions to the Ode, entitled "Intimations of Immortality," pervade the last stanza of the foregoing Poem.

COMPOSED DURING A STORM

Written in Rydal Woods, by the side of a torrent.

ONE who was suffering tumult in his soul,
Yet failed to seek the sure relief of prayer,
Went forth—his course surrendering to the care
Of the fierce wind, while mid-day lightnings prowl
Insidiously, untimely thunders growl;
While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers, tear
The lingering remnant of their yellow hair,
And shivering wolves, surprised with darkness, howl
As if the sun were not. He raised his eye
Soul-smitten; for, that instant, did appear
Large space ('mid dreadful clouds) of purest sky,
An azure disc—shield of Tranquillity;
Invisible, unlooked-for, minister
Of providential goodness ever nigh!
1819.

THIS, AND THE TWO FOLLOWING, WERE SUGGESTED BY MR. W. WESTALL'S VIEWS OF THE CAVES, ETC., IN YORKSHIRE

PURE element of waters! wheresoe'er
Thou dost forsake thy subterranean haunts,
Green herbs, bright flowers, and berry-bearing plants,
Rise into life and in thy train appear:
And, through the sunny portion of the year,
Swift insects shine, thy hovering pursuivants:
And, if thy bounty fail, the forest pants;
And hart and hind and hunter with his spear,
Languish and droop together. Nor unfelt
In man's perturbèd soul thy sway benign;
And, haply, far within the marble belt
Of central earth, where tortured Spirits pine
For grace and goodness lost, thy murmurs melt
Their anguish,—and they blend sweet songs with thine.[1]
1819.

MALHAM COVE

WAS the aim frustrated by force or guile,
When giants scooped from out the rocky ground,
Tier under tier, this semicirque profound?
(Giants—the same who built in Erin's isle
That Causeway with incomparable toil!)—
Oh, had this vast theatric structure wound
With finished sweep into a perfect round,
No mightier work had gained the plausive smile
Of all-beholding Phœbus! But, alas,
Vain earth! false world! Foundations must be laid
In Heaven; for, 'mid the wreck of IS and WAS,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.
1819.

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[1] Waters (as Mr. Westall informs us in the letterpress prefixed to his admirable views) are invariably found to flow through these caverns.

GORDALE

At early dawn, or rather when the air
Glimmers with fading light, and shadowy Eve
Is busiest to confer and to bereave;
Then, pensive Votary! let thy feet repair
To Gordale-chasm, terrific as the lair
Where the young lions couch; for so, by leave
Of the propitious hour, thou may'st perceive
The local Deity, with oozy hair
And mineral crown, beside his jaggèd urn,
Recumbent: Him thou may'st behold, who hides
His lineaments by day, yet there presides,
Teaching the docile waters how to turn,
Or (if need be) impediment to spurn,
And force their passage to the salt-sea tides!

1819.

"AERIAL ROCK—WHOSE SOLITARY BROW"

A projecting point of Loughrigg, nearly in front of Rydal Mount. Thence looking at it, you are struck with the boldness of its aspect; but walking under it, you admire the beauty of its details. It is vulgarly called Holme-scar, probably from the insulated pasture by the waterside below it.

Aerial Rock—whose solitary brow
From this low threshold daily meets my sight;
When I step forth to hail the morning light;
Or quit the stars with a lingering farewell—how
Shall Fancy pay to thee a grateful vow?
How, with the Muse's aid, her love attest?
—By planting on thy naked head the crest
Of an imperial Castle, which the plough
Of ruin shall not touch. Innocent scheme!
That doth presume no more than to supply
A grace the sinuous vale and roaring stream
Want, through neglect of hoar Antiquity.
Rise, then, ye votive Towers! and catch a gleam
Of golden sunset, ere it fade and die.

1819.

THE WILD DUCK'S NEST

I observed this beautiful nest on the largest island of Rydal Water.

The imperial Consort of the Fairy-king
Owns not a sylvan bower; or gorgeous cell
With emerald floored, and with purpureal shell
Ceilinged and roofed; that is so fair a thing
As this low structure, for the tasks of Spring,
Prepared by one who loves the buoyant swell
Of the brisk waves, yet here consents to dwell;
And spreads in steadfast peace her brooding wing.
Words cannot paint the o'ershadowing yew-tree bough,
And dimly-gleaming Nest,—a hollow crown
Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
Fine as the mother's softest plumes allow:
I gazed—and, self-accused while gazing, sighed
For human-kind, weak slaves of cumbrous pride!

1819.

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN "THE COMPLETE ANGLER."

While flowing rivers yield a blameless sport,
Shall live the name of Walton: Sage benign!
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and line
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.
Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline,
He found the longest summer day too short,
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford brook—
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet Book,
The cowslip-bank and shady willow-tree;
And the fresh meads—where flowed, from every nook
Of his full bosom, gladsome Piety!

1819.

CAPTIVITY—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

"As the cold aspect of a sunless way
Strikes through the Traveller's frame with deadlier chill,
Oft as appears a grove, or obvious hill,
Glistening with unparticipated ray,
Or shining slope where he must never stray;
So joys, remembered without wish or will
Sharpen the keenest edge of present ill,—
On the crushed heart a heavier burthen lay.
Just Heaven, contract the compass of my mind
To fit proportion with my altered state!
Quench those felicities whose light I find
Reflected in my bosom all too late!—
O be my spirit, like my thraldom, strait;
And, like mine eyes that stream with sorrow, blind!" 1819.

TO A SNOWDROP

Lone Flower, hemmed in with snows and white as they
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!
1819.

ON SEEING A TUFT OF SNOWDROPS IN A STORM

When haughty expectations prostrate lie,
And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing,
Oft shall the lowly weak, till nature bring
Mature release, in fair society
Survive, and Fortune's utmost anger try;
Like these frail snowdrops that together cling,
And nod their helmets, smitten by the wing
Of many a furious whirl-blast sweeping by.
Observe the faithful flowers! if small to great
May lead the thoughts, thus struggling used to stand
The Emathian phalanx, nobly obstinate;
And so the bright immortal Theban band,
Whom onset, fiercely urged at Jove's command,
Might overwhelm, but could not separate!
1819.

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE VALLEYS OF WESTMORELAND, ON EASTER SUNDAY

With each recurrence of this glorious morn
That saw the Saviour in his human frame
Rise from the dead, erewhile the Cottage-dame
Put on fresh raiment—till that hour unworn:
Domestic hands the home-bred wool had shorn,
And she who span it culled the daintiest fleece,
In thoughtful reverence to the Prince of Peace,
Whose temples bled beneath the platted thorn.
A blest estate when piety sublime
These humble props disdained not! O green dales!
Sad may *I* be who heard your sabbath chime
When Art's abused inventions were unknown;
Kind Nature's various wealth was all your own;
And benefits were weighed in Reason's scales! 1819.

"GRIEF, THOU HAST LOST AN EVER-READY FRIEND"

I could write a treatise of lamentation upon the changes brought about among the cottages of Westmoreland by the silence of the spinning-wheel. During long winter nights and wet days, the wheel upon which wool was spun gave employment to a great part of a family. The old man, however infirm, was able to card the wool, as he sate in the corner by the fireside; and often, when a boy, have I admired the cylinders of carded wool which were softly laid upon each other by his side. Two wheels were often at work on the same floor; and others of the family, chiefly little children, were occupied in teasing and cleaning the wool to fit it for the hand of the carder. So that all, except the smallest infants, were contributing to mutual support. Such was the employment that prevailed in the pastoral vales. Where wool was not at hand, in the small rural towns, the wheel for spinning flax was almost in as constant use, if knitting was not preferred; which latter occupation has the advantage (in some cases disadvantage) that, not being of necessity stationary, it allowed of gossiping about from house to house, which good housewives reckoned an idle thing.

GRIEF, thou hast lost an ever-ready friend
Now that the cottage Spinning-wheel is mute;
And Care—a comforter that best could suit
Her froward mood, and softliest reprehend;
And Love—a charmer's voice, that used to lend,
More efficaciously than aught that flows
From harp or lute, kind influence to compose
The throbbing pulse—else troubled without end:
Even Joy could tell, Joy craving truce and rest
From her own overflow, what power sedate
On those revolving motions did await
Assiduously—to soothe her aching breast;
And, to a point of just relief, abate
The mantling triumphs of a day too blest.
1819.

"I WATCH, AND LONG HAVE WATCHED, WITH CALM REGRET"

Suggested in front of Rydal Mount, the rocky parapet being the summit of Loughrigg Fell opposite. Not once only, but a hundred times, have the feelings of this Sonnet been awakened by the same objects seen from the same place.

I WATCH, and long have watched, with calm regret
Yon slowly-sinking star—immortal Sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering quire!
Blue ether still surrounds him—yet—and yet;
But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns—transmuted to a dusky fire—
Then pays submissively the appointed debt
To the flying moments, and is seen no more.
Angels and gods! We struggle with our fate,
While health, power, glory, from their height decline,
Depressed; and then extinguished; and our state,
In this, how different, lost Star, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams restore!
1819.

"I HEARD (ALAS! 'TWAS ONLY IN A DREAM)"

I HEARD (alas! 'twas only in a dream)
Strains—which, as sage Antiquity believed,
By waking ears have sometimes been received
Wafted adown the wind from lake or stream;
A most melodious requiem, a supreme
And perfect harmony of notes, achieved
By a fair Swan on drowsy billows heaved,
O'er which her pinions shed a silver gleam.
For is she not the votary of Apollo?
And knows she not, singing as he inspires,
That bliss awaits her which the ungenial Hollow[1]
Of the dull earth partakes not, nor desires?
Mount, tuneful Bird, and join the immortal quires!
She soared—and I awoke, struggling in vain to follow.
1819.

THE HAUNTED TREE

TO ———

This tree grew in the park of Rydal, and I have often listened to its creaking as described.

THOSE silver clouds collected round the sun
His mid-day warmth abate not, seeming less

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[1] See the Phædon of Plato, by which this Sonnet was suggested.

To overshade than multiply his beams
By soft reflection—grateful to the sky,
To rocks, fields, woods. Nor doth our human sense
Ask, for its pleasure, screen or canopy
More ample than the time-dismantled Oak
Spreads o'er this tuft of heath, which now, attired
In the whole fulness of its bloom, affords
Couch beautiful as e'er for earthly use
Was fashioned; whether, by the hand of Art,
That eastern Sultan, amid flowers enwrought
On silken tissue, might diffuse his limbs
In languor; or, by Nature, for repose
Of panting Wood-nymph, wearied with the chase.
O Lady! fairer in thy Poet's sight
Than fairest spiritual creature of the groves,
Approach;—and, thus invited, crown with rest
The noon-tide hour: though truly some there are
Whose footsteps superstitiously avoid
This venerable Tree; for, when the wind
Blows keenly, it sends forth a creaking sound
(Above the general roar of woods and crags)
Distinctly heard from far—a doleful note!
As if (so Grecian shepherds would have deemed)
The Hamadryad, pent within, bewailed
Some bitter wrong. Nor is it unbelieved,
By ruder fancy, that a troubled ghost
Haunts the old trunk; lamenting deeds of which
The flowery ground is conscious. But no wind
Sweeps now along this elevated ridge;
Not even a zephyr stirs;—the obnoxious Tree
Is mute; and, in his silence, would look down,
O lovely Wanderer of the trackless hills,
On thy reclining form with more delight
Than his coevals in the sheltered vale
Seem to participate, the while they view
Their own far-stretching arms and leafy heads
Vividly pictured in some glassy pool,
That, for a brief space, checks the hurrying stream!
1819.

SEPTEMBER 1819

The sylvan slopes with corn-clad fields
Are hung, as if with golden shields,
Bright trophies of the sun!
Like a fair sister of the sky,
Unruffled doth the blue lake lie,
The mountains looking on.

And, sooth to say, yon vocal grove,
Albeit uninspired by love,
By love untaught to ring,
May well afford to mortal ear
An impulse more profoundly dear
Than music of the Spring.

For *that* from turbulence and heat
Proceeds, from some uneasy seat
In nature's struggling frame,
Some region of impatient life:
And jealousy, and quivering strife,
Therein a portion claim.

This, this is holy;—while I hear
These vespers of another year,
This hymn of thanks and praise,
My spirit seems to mount above
The anxieties of human love,
And earth's precarious days.

But list!—though winter storms be nigh,
Unchecked is that soft harmony:
There lives Who can provide
For all his creatures; and in Him,
Even like the radiant Seraphim,
These choristers confide.

UPON THE SAME OCCASION

Departing summer hath assumed
An aspect tenderly illumed,
The gentlest look of spring;
That calls from yonder leafy shade
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,
A timely carolling.

No faint and hesitating trill,
Such tribute as to winter chill
The lonely redbreast pays!
Clear, loud, and lively is the din,
From social warblers gathering in
Their harvest of sweet lays.

Nor doth the example fail to cheer
Me, conscious that my leaf is sere,
And yellow on the bough:—
Fall, rosy garlands, from my head!
Ye myrtle wreaths, your fragrance shed
Around a younger brow!

Yet will I temperately rejoice;
Wide is the range, and free the choice
Of undiscordant themes;
Which, haply, kindred souls may prize
Not less than vernal ecstasies,
And passion's feverish dreams.

For deathless powers to verse belong,
And they like Demi-gods are strong
On whom the Muses smile;
But some their function have disclaimed,
Best pleased with what is aptliest framed
To enervate and defile.

Not such the initiatory strains
Committed to the silent plains
In Britain's earliest dawn:
Trembled the groves, the stars grew pale,
While all-too-daringly the veil
Of nature was withdrawn!

Nor such the spirit-stirring note
When the live chords Alcæus smote,
Inflamed by sense of wrong;
Woe! woe to Tyrants! from the lyre
Broke threateningly, in sparkles dire
Of fierce vindictive song.

And not unhallowed was the page
By wingèd Love inscribed, to assuage
The pangs of vain pursuit;
Love listening while the Lesbian Maid
With finest touch of passion swayed
Her own Æolian lute.

O ye, who patiently explore
The wreck of Herculanean lore,
What rapture! could ye seize
Some Theban fragment, or unroll
One precious, tender-hearted, scroll
Of pure Simonides.

That were, indeed, a genuine birth
Of poesy; a bursting forth
Of genius from the dust:
What Horace gloried to behold,
What Maro loved, shall we enfold?
Can haughty Time be just! 1819.

"THERE IS A LITTLE UNPRETENDING RILL"

This Rill trickles down the hill-side into Windermere, near Lowwood. My sister and I, on our first visit together to this part of the country, walked from Kendal, and we rested to refresh ourselves by the side of the lake where the streamlet falls into it. This sonnet was written some years after in recollection of that happy ramble, that most happy day and hour.

There is a little unpretending Rill
Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
That ever among Men or Naiads sought
Notice or name!—It quivers down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will;
Yet to my mind this scanty Stream is brought
Oftener than Ganges or the Nile; a thought
Of private recollection sweet and still!
Months perish with their moons; year treads on year!
But, faithful Emma! thou with me canst say
That, while ten thousand pleasures disappear,
And flies their memory fast almost as they;
The immortal Spirit of one happy day
Lingers beside that Rill, in vision clear.
1820.

COMPOSED ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY STREAM

Dogmatic Teachers, of the snow-white fur!
Ye wrangling Schoolmen, of the scarlet hood!
Who, with a keenness not to be withstood,
Press the point home, or falter and demur,
Checked in your course by many a teasing burr;
These natural council-seats your acrid blood
Might cool;—and, as the Genius of the flood
Stoops willingly to animate and spur
Each lighter function slumbering in the brain,
Yon eddying balls of foam, these arrowy gleams

That o'er the pavement of the surging streams
Welter and flash, a synod might detain
With subtle speculations, haply vain,
But surely less so than your far-fetched themes! 1820.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MAJESTY (GEORGE THE THIRD)

Ward of the Law!—dread Shadow of a King!
Whose realm had dwindled to one stately room;
Whose universe was gloom immersed in gloom,
Darkness as thick as life o'er life could fling,
Save haply for some feeble glimmering
Of Faith and Hope—if thou, by nature's doom,
Gently hast sunk into the quiet tomb,
Why should we bend in grief, to sorrow cling,
When thankfulness were best?—Fresh-flowing tears,
Or, where tears flow not, sigh succeeding sigh,
Yield to such after-thought the sole reply
Which justly it can claim. The Nation hears
In this deep knell, silent for threescore years,
An unexampled voice of awful memory!
1820.

"THE STARS ARE MANSIONS BUILT BY NATURE'S HAND"

The stars are mansions built by Nature's hand,
And, haply, there the spirits of the blest
Dwell, clothed in radiance, their immortal vest;
Huge Ocean shows, within his yellow strand,
A habitation marvellously planned,
For life to occupy in love and rest;
All that we see—is dome, or vault, or nest,
Or fortress, reared at Nature's sage command.
Glad thought for every season! but the Spring
Gave it while cares were weighing on my heart,
'Mid song of birds, and insects murmuring;
And while the youthful year's prolific art—
Of bud, leaf, blade, and flower—was fashioning
Abodes where self-disturbance hath no part.
1820.

TO THE LADY MARY LOWTHER

With a selection from the Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea; and extracts of similar character from other Writers; transcribed by a female friend.

Lady! I rifled a Parnassian Cave
(But seldom trod) of mildly-gleaming ore;
And culled, from sundry beds, a lucid store
Of genuine crystals, pure as those that pave
The azure brooks, where Dian joys to lave
Her spotless limbs; and ventured to explore
Dim shades—for reliques, upon Lethe's shore,
Cast up at random by the sullen wave.
To female hands the treasures were resigned;
And lo this Work!—a grotto bright and clear
From stain or taint; in which thy blameless mind
May feed on thoughts though pensive not austere;
Or, if thy deeper spirit be inclined
To holy musing, it may enter here.
1820.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED THE PUBLICATION OF A CERTAIN POEM

See Milton's Sonnet, beginning, "A Book was writ of late called 'Tetrachordon.'"

A Book came forth of late, called Peter Bell;
Not negligent the style;—the matter?—good
As aught that song records of Robin Hood;
Or Roy, renowned through many a Scottish dell;
But some (who brook those hackneyed themes full well,

Nor heat, at Tam o' Shanter's name, their blood)
Waxed wroth, and with foul claws, a harpy brood,
On Bard and Hero clamorously fell.
Heed not, wild Rover once through heath and glen,
Who mad'st at length the better life thy choice,
Heed not such onset! nay, if praise of men
To thee appear not an unmeaning voice,
Lift up that grey-haired forehead, and rejoice
In the just tribute of thy Poet's pen!

1820.

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820

YE sacred Nurseries of blooming Youth!
In whose collegiate shelter England's Flowers
Expand, enjoying through their vernal hours
The air of liberty, the light of truth;
Much have ye suffered from Time's gnawing tooth:
Yet, O ye spires of Oxford! domes and towers!
Gardens and groves! your presence overpowers
The soberness of reason; till, in sooth,
Transformed, and rushing on a bold exchange,
I slight my own beloved Cam, to range
Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet;
Pace the long avenue, or glide adown
The stream-like windings of that glorious street—
An eager Novice robed in fluttering gown!

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820

SHAME on this faithless heart! that could allow
Such transport, though but for a moment's space;
Not while—to aid the spirit of the place—
The crescent moon clove with its glittering prow
The clouds, or night-bird sang from shady bough;
But in plain daylight:—She, too, at my side,
Who, with her heart's experience satisfied,
Maintains inviolate its slightest vow!
Sweet Fancy! other gifts must I receive;
Proofs of a higher sovereignty I claim;
Take from *her* brow the withering flowers of eve,
And to that brow life's morning wreath restore;
Let *her* be comprehended in the frame
Of these illusions, or they please no more.

JUNE 1820

FAME tells of groves—from England far away—
[1] Groves that inspire the Nightingale to trill
And modulate, with subtle reach of skill
Elsewhere unmatched, her ever-varying lay;
Such bold report I venture to gainsay:
For I have heard the quire of Richmond hill
Chanting, with indefatigable bill,
Strains that recalled to mind a distant day;
When, haply under shade of that same wood,
And scarcely conscious of the dashing oars
Plied steadily between those willowy shores,
The sweet-souled Poet of the Seasons stood—
Listening, and listening long, in rapturous mood,
Ye heavenly Birds! to your Progenitors.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT

1820

I set out in company with my Wife and Sister, and Mr. and Mrs. Monkhouse, then just married, and Miss Horrocks. These two ladies, sisters, we left at Berne, while Mr. Monkhouse took the opportunity of making an excursion with us among the Alps as far as Milan. Mr. H. C. Robinson joined us at Lucerne, and when this ramble was completed we rejoined at Geneva the two ladies we had left at Berne and proceeded to Paris, where Mr. Monkhouse and H. C. R. left us, and where we spent five weeks, of which there is not a record in these poems.

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[1] Wallachia is the country alluded to.

DEDICATION

(SENT WITH THESE POEMS, IN MS., TO ——)

DEAR Fellow-travellers! think not that the Muse,
To You presenting these memorial Lays,
Can hope the general eye thereon would gaze,
As on a mirror that gives back the hues
Of living Nature; no—though free to choose
The greenest bowers, the most inviting ways,
The fairest landscapes and the brightest days—
Her skill she tried with less ambitious views.
For You she wrought: Ye only can supply
The life, the truth, the beauty: she confides
In that enjoyment which with You abides,
Trusts to your love and vivid memory;
Thus far contented, that for You her verse
Shall lack not power the "meeting soul to pierce!"

W. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, *Nov.* 1821.

I

FISH-WOMEN—ON LANDING AT CALAIS

'TIS said, fantastic ocean doth enfold
The likeness of whate'er on land is seen;
But, if the Nereid Sisters and their Queen,
Above whose heads the tide so long hath rolled,
The Dames resemble whom we here behold,
How fearful were it down through opening waves
To sink, and meet them in their fretted caves,
Withered, grotesque, immeasurably old,
And shrill and fierce in accent!—Fear it not:
For they Earth's fairest daughters do excel;
Pure undecaying beauty is their lot;
Their voices into liquid music swell,
Thrilling each pearly cleft and sparry grot,
The undisturbed abodes where Sea-nymphs dwell![1]

II

BRUGÈS[1]

BRUGÈS I saw attired with golden light
(Streamed from the west) as with a robe of power:
The splendour fled; and now the sunless hour,
That, slowly making way for peaceful night,
Best suits with fallen grandeur, to my sight
Offers the beauty, the magnificence,
And sober graces, left her for defence
Against the injuries of time, the spite
Of fortune, and the desolating storms
Of future war. Advance not—spare to hide,
O gentle Power of darkness! these mild hues;
Obscure not yet these silent avenues
Of stateliest architecture, where the Forms
Of nun-like females, with soft motion, glide!

III

BRUGÈS

THE Spirit of Antiquity—enshrined
In sumptuous buildings, vocal in sweet song,
In picture, speaking with heroic tongue,
And with devout solemnities entwined—
Mounts to the seat of grace within the mind:
Hence Forms that glide with swan-like ease along,
Hence motions, even amid the vulgar throng,
To an harmonious decency confined:
As if the streets were consecrated ground,
The city one vast temple, dedicate
To mutual respect in thought and deed;
To leisure, to forbearances sedate;
To social cares from jarring passions freed;
A deeper peace than that in deserts found!

IV

AFTER VISITING THE FIELD OF WATERLOO

A WINGÈD Goddess—clothed in vesture wrought
Of rainbow colours; One whose port was bold,
Whose overburthened hand could scarcely hold
The glittering crowns and garlands which it brought—
Hovered in air above the far-famed Spot.
She vanished; leaving prospect blank and cold

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[1] See Note.

Of wind-swept corn that wide around us rolled
In dreary billows; wood, and meagre cot,
And monuments that soon must disappear:
Yet a dread local recompence we found;
While glory seemed betrayed, while patriot-zeal
Sank in our hearts, we felt as men *should* feel
With such vast hoards of hidden carnage near,
And horror breathing from the silent ground!

V

BETWEEN NAMUR AND LIEGE

The scenery on the Meuse pleases me more, upon the whole, than that of the Rhine, though the river itself is much inferior in grandeur. The rocks both in form and colour, especially between Namur and Liege, surpass any upon the Rhine, though they are in several places disfigured by quarries, whence stones were taken for the new fortifications. This is much to be regretted, for they are useless, and the scars will remain perhaps for thousands of years. A like injury to a still greater degree has been inflicted, in my memory, upon the beautiful rocks of Clifton on the banks of the Avon. There is probably in existence a very long letter of mine to Sir Uvedale Price, in which was given a description of the landscapes on the Meuse as compared with those on the Rhine.

Details in the spirit of these sonnets are given both in Mrs. Wordsworth's Journals and my Sister's, and the re-perusal of them has strengthened a wish long entertained that somebody would put together, as in one work, the notices contained in them, omitting particulars that were written down merely to aid our memory, and bringing the whole into as small a compass as is consistent with the general interests belonging to the scenes, circumstances, and objects touched on by each writer.

What lovelier home could gentle Fancy choose?
Is this the stream, whose cities, heights, and plains,
War's favourite playground, are with crimson stains
Familiar, as the Morn with pearly dews?
The Morn, that now, along the silver MEUSE,
Spreading her peaceful ensigns, calls the swains
To tend their silent boats and ringing wains,
Or strip the bough whose mellow fruit bestrews
The ripening corn beneath it. As mine eyes
Turn from the fortified and threatening hill,
How sweet the prospect of yon watery glade,
With its grey rocks clustering in pensive shade—
That, shaped like old monastic turrets, rise
From the smooth meadow-ground, serene and still!

VI

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

Was it to disenchant, and to undo,
That we approached the Seat of Charlemaine?
To sweep from many an old romantic strain
That faith which no devotion may renew!
Why does this puny Church present to view
Her feeble columns? and that scanty chair!
This sword that one of our weak times might wear!
Objects of false pretence, or meanly true!
If from a traveller's fortune I might claim
A palpable memorial of that day,
Then would I seek the Pyrenean Breach
That ROLAND clove with huge two-handed sway,
And to the enormous labour left his name,
Where unremitting frosts the rocky crescent bleach.[1]

VII

IN THE CATHEDRAL AT COLOGNE

O for the help of Angels to complete
This Temple—Angels governed by a plan
Thus far pursued (how gloriously!) by Man,
Studious that HE might not disdain the seat
Who dwells in heaven! But that aspiring heat

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[1] See Note.

Hath failed; and now, ye Powers! whose gorgeous wings
And splendid aspect yon emblazonings
But faintly picture, 'twere an office meet
For you, on these unfinished shafts to try
The midnight virtues of your harmony:—
This vast design might tempt you to repeat
Strains that call forth upon empyreal ground
Immortal Fabrics, rising to the sound
Of penetrating harps and voices sweet!

VIII

IN A CARRIAGE, UPON THE BANKS OF THE RHINE

AMID this dance of objects sadness steals
O'er the defrauded heart—while sweeping by,
As in a fit of Thespian jollity,
Beneath her vine-leaf crown the green Earth reels:
Backward, in rapid evanescence, wheels
The venerable pageantry of Time,
Each beetling rampart, and each tower sublime,
And what the Dell unwillingly reveals
Of lurking cloistral arch, through trees espied
Near the bright River's edge. Yet why repine?
To muse, to creep, to halt at will, to gaze—
Such sweet wayfaring—of life's spring the pride,
Her summer's faithful joy—*that* still is mine,
And in fit measure cheers autumnal days.

IX

HYMN

FOR THE BOATMEN, AS THEY APPROACH THE RAPIDS UNDER THE CASTLE OF HEIDELBERG

JESU! bless our slender Boat,
By the current swept along;
Loud its threatenings—let them not
Drown the music of a song
Breathed thy mercy to implore,
Where these troubled waters roar!

Saviour, for our warning, seen
Bleeding on that precious Rood;
If, while through the meadows green
Gently wound the peaceful flood,
We forgot Thee, do not Thou
Disregard thy Suppliants now!

Hither, like yon ancient Tower
Watching o'er the River's bed,
Fling the shadow of thy power,
Else we sleep among the dead;
Thou who trod'st the billowy sea,
Shield us in our jeopardy!

Guide our Bark among the waves;
Through the rocks our passage smooth;
Where the whirlpool frets and raves
Let thy love its anger soothe:
All our hope is placed in Thee;
Miserere Domine![1]

X

THE SOURCE OF THE DANUBE

NOT, like his great Compeers, indignantly
Doth DANUBE spring to life![1] The wandering Stream
(Who loves the Cross, yet to the Crescent's gleam
Unfolds a willing breast) with infant glee
Slips from his prison walls: and Fancy, free
To follow in his track of silver light,
Mounts on rapt wing, and with a moment's flight
Hath reached the encincture of that gloomy sea
Whose waves the Orphean lyre forbade to meet
In conflict; whose rough winds forgot their jars
To waft the heroic progeny of Greece;
When the first Ship sailed for the Golden Fleece—
ARGO—exalted for that daring feat
To fix in heaven her shape distinct with stars.

[1] See Note.

XI

ON APPROACHING THE STAUB-BACH, LAUTERBRUNNEN

Uttered by whom, or how inspired—designed
For what strange service, does this concert reach
Our ears, and near the dwellings of mankind!
'Mid fields familiarized to human speech?—
No Mermaid's warble—to allay the wind
Driving some vessel toward a dangerous beach—
More thrilling melodies; Witch answering Witch,
To chant a love-spell, never intertwined
Notes shrill and wild with art more musical:
Alas! that from the lips of abject Want
Or Idleness in tatters mendicant
The strain should flow—free Fancy to enthral,
And with regret and useless pity haunt
This bold, this bright, this sky-born, Waterfall![1]

XII

THE FALL OF THE AAR—HANDEC

From the fierce aspect of this River, throwing
His giant body o'er the steep rock's brink,
Back in astonishment and fear we shrink:
But, gradually a calmer look bestowing,
Flowers we espy beside the torrent growing;
Flowers that peep forth from many a cleft and chink,
And, from the whirlwind of his anger, drink
Hues ever fresh, in rocky fortress blowing:
They suck—from breath that, threatening to destroy,
Is more benignant than the dewy eve—
Beauty, and life, and motions as of joy:
Nor doubt but He to whom yon Pine-trees nod
Their heads in sign of worship, Nature's God,
These humbler adorations will receive.

XIII

MEMORIAL

NEAR THE OUTLET OF THE LAKE OF THUN

"DEM
ANDENKEN
MEINES FREUNDES
ALOYS REDING
MDCCCXVIII."

Aloys Reding, it will be remembered, was Captain-General of the Swiss forces, which, with a courage and perseverance worthy of the cause, opposed the flagitious and too successful attempt of Buonaparte to subjugate their country.

Around a wild and woody hill
A gravelled pathway treading,
We reached a votive Stone that bears
The name of Aloys Reding.

Well judged the Friend who placed it there
For silence and protection;
And haply with a finer care
Of dutiful affection.

The Sun regards it from the West;
And, while in summer glory
He sets, his sinking yields a type
Of that pathetic story:

And oft he tempts the patriot Swiss
Amid the grove to linger;
Till all is dim, save this bright Stone
Touched by his golden finger.

XIV

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE CATHOLIC CANTONS

Doomed as we are our native dust
To wet with many a bitter shower,
It ill befits us to disdain
The altar, to deride the fane,
Where simple Sufferers bend, in trust
To win a happier hour.

I love, where spreads the village lawn,
Upon some knee-worn cell to gaze:
Hail to the firm unmoving cross,
Aloft, where pines their branches toss!
And to the chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways!

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[1] See Note.

Where'er we roam—along the brink
Of Rhine—or by the sweeping Po,
Through Alpine vale, or champain wide,
Whate'er we look on, at our side
Be Charity!—to bid us think,
And feel, if we would know.

XV

AFTER-THOUGHT

O LIFE! without thy chequered scene
Of right and wrong, of weal and woe,
Success and failure, could a ground
For magnanimity be found;
For faith, 'mid ruined hopes, serene?
Or whence could virtue flow?

Pain entered through a ghastly breach—
Nor while sin lasts must effort cease;
Heaven upon earth's an empty boast;
But, for the bowers of Eden lost,
Mercy has placed within our reach
A portion of God's peace.

XVI

SCENE ON THE LAKE OF BRIENTZ

"WHAT know we of the Blest above
But that they sing and that they love?"
Yet, if they ever did inspire
A mortal hymn, or shaped the choir,
Now, where those harvest Damsels float
Homeward in their rugged Boat,
(While all the ruffling winds are fled—
Each slumbering on some mountain's head)
Now, surely, hath that gracious aid
Been felt, that influence is displayed.
Pupils of Heaven, in order stand
The rustic Maidens, every hand
Upon a Sister's shoulder laid,—
To chant, as glides the boat along,
A simple, but a touching, song;
To chant, as Angels do above,
The melodies of Peace in love!

XVII

ENGELBERG, THE HILL OF ANGELS[1]

FOR gentlest uses, oft-times Nature takes
The work of Fancy from her willing hands;
And such a beautiful creation makes
As renders needless spells and magic wands,
And for the boldest tale belief commands.
When first mine eyes beheld that famous Hill,
The sacred ENGELBERG, celestial Bands,
With intermingling motions soft and still,
Hung round its top, on wings that changed their hues at will.

Clouds do not name those Visitants; they were
The very Angels whose authentic lays,
Sung from that heavenly ground in middle air,
Made known the spot where piety should raise
A holy Structure to the Almighty's praise.
Resplendent Apparition! if in vain
My ears did listen, 'twas enough to gaze;
And watch the slow departure of the train,
Whose skirts the glowing Mountain thirsted to detain.

XVIII

OUR LADY OF THE SNOW

MEEK Virgin Mother, more benign
Than fairest Star, upon the height
Of thy own mountain,[2] set to keep
Lone vigils through the hours of sleep,
What eye can look upon thy shrine
Untroubled at the sight?

These crowded offerings as they hang
In sign of misery relieved,
Even these, without intent of theirs,
Report of comfortless despairs,
Of many a deep and cureless pang
And confidence deceived.

To Thee, in this aërial cleft,
As to a common centre, tend
All sufferers that no more rely
On mortal succour—all who sigh
And pine, of human hope bereft,
Nor wish for earthly friend.

And hence, O Virgin Mother mild!
Though plenteous flowers around thee blow,
Not only from the dreary strife
Of Winter, but the storms of life,

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[1] See Note.

[2] Mount Righi.

Thee have thy Votaries aptly styled,
Our Lady of the Snow.

Even for the Man who stops not here,
But down the irriguous valley hies,
Thy very name, O Lady! flings,
O'er blooming fields and gushing springs,
A tender sense of shadowy fear,
And chastening sympathies!

Nor falls that intermingling shade
To summer-gladsomeness unkind:
It chastens only to requite
With gleams of fresher, purer, light;
While, o'er the flower-enamelled glade,
More sweetly breathes the wind.

But on!—a tempting downward way,
A verdant path before us lies;
Clear shines the glorious sun above;
Then give free course to joy and love,
Deeming the evil of the day
Sufficient for the wise.

XIX

EFFUSION

IN PRESENCE OF THE PAINTED TOWER OF TELL, AT ALTORF

This Tower stands upon the spot where grew the Linden Tree against which his Son is said to have been placed, when the Father's archery was put to proof under circumstances so famous in Swiss Story.

What though the Italian pencil wrought
    not here,
Nor such fine skill as did the meed bestow
On Marathonian valour, yet the tear
Springs forth in presence of this gaudy show,
While narrow cares their limits overflow.
Thrice happy, burghers, peasants, warriors
    old,
Infants in arms, and ye, that as ye go
Homeward or schoolward, ape what ye
    behold!
Heroes before your time, in frolic fancy
    bold!

And when that calm Spectatress from on
    high
Looks down—the bright and solitary Moon,
Who never gazes but to beautify;
And snow-fed torrents, which the blaze of
    noon
Roused into fury, murmur a soft tune
That fosters peace, and gentleness recalls;
Then might the passing Monk receive a
    boon
Of saintly pleasure from these pictured
    walls,
While, on the warlike groups, the mellow-
    ing lustre falls.

How blest the souls who when their trials
    come
Yield not to terror or despondency,
But face like that sweet Boy their mortal
    doom,
Whose head the ruddy apple tops, while he
Expectant stands beneath the linden tree:
He quakes not like the timid forest game,
But smiles—the hesitating shaft to free;
Assured that Heaven its justice will proclaim,
And to his Father give its own unerring aim.

XX

THE TOWN OF SCHWYTZ

By antique Fancy trimmed—though lowly,
    bred
To dignity—in thee, O Schwytz! are seen
The genuine features of the golden mean;
Equality by Prudence governèd,
Or jealous Nature ruling in her stead;
And, therefore, art thou blest with peace,
    serene
As that of the sweet fields and meadows
    green
In unambitious compass round thee spread.
Majestic Berne, high on her guardian
    steep,
Holding a central station of command,
Might well be styled this noble body's
    Head;
Thou, lodged 'mid mountainous entrench-
    ments deep,
Its Heart; and ever may the heroic Land
Thy name, O Schwytz, in happy freedom
    keep![1]

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[1] Nearly 500 years (says Ebel, speaking of the French Invasion) had elapsed, when, for the first time, foreign soldiers were seen upon the frontiers of this small Canton, to impose upon it the laws of their governors.

XXI

ON HEARING THE "RANZ DES VACHES" ON THE TOP OF THE PASS OF ST. GOTHARD

I LISTEN—but no faculty of mine
Avails those modulations to detect,
Which, heard in foreign lands, the Swiss affect
With tenderest passion; leaving him to pine
(So fame reports) and die,—his sweet-breathed kine
Remembering, and green Alpine pastures decked
With vernal flowers. Yet may we not reject
The tale as fabulous.—Here while I recline,
Mindful how others by this simple Strain
Are moved, for me—upon this Mountain named
Of God himself from dread pre-eminence—
Aspiring thoughts, by memory reclaimed,
Yield to the Music's touching influence;
And joys of distant home my heart enchain.

XXII

FORT FUENTES

The Ruins of Fort Fuentes form the crest of a rocky eminence that rises from the plain at the head of the Lake of Como, commanding views up the Valteline, and toward the town of Chiavenna. The prospect in the latter direction is characterised by melancholy sublimity. We rejoiced at being favoured with a distinct view of those Alpine heights; not, as we had expected from the breaking up of the storm, steeped in celestial glory, yet in communion with clouds floating or stationary—scatterings from heaven. The Ruin is interesting both in mass and in detail. An Inscription, upon elaborately sculptured marble lying on the ground, records that the Fort had been erected by Count Fuentes in the year 1600, during the reign of Philip the Third; and the Chapel, about twenty years after, by one of his Descendants. Marble pillars of gateways are yet standing, and a considerable part of the Chapel walls: a smooth green turf has taken place of the pavement, and we could see no trace of altar or image; but everywhere something to remind one of former splendour, and of devastation and tumult. In our ascent we had passed abundance of wild vines intermingled with bushes: near the ruins were some ill tended, but growing willingly; and rock, turf, and fragments of the pile, are alike covered or adorned with a variety of flowers, among which the rose-coloured pink was growing in great beauty. While descending, we discovered on the ground, apart from the path, and at a considerable distance from the ruined Chapel, a statue of a Child in pure white marble, uninjured by the explosion that had driven it so far down the hill. "How little," we exclaimed, "are these things valued here! Could we but transport this pretty Image to our own garden!"—Yet it seemed it would have been a pity any one should remove it from its couch in the wilderness, which may be its own for hundreds of years.—*Extract from Journal.*

DREAD hour! when, upheaved by war's sulphurous blast,
This sweet-visaged Cherub of Parian stone
So far from the holy enclosure was cast,
To couch in this thicket of brambles alone,

To rest where the lizard may bask in the palm
Of his half-open hand pure from blemish or speck;
And the green, gilded snake, without troubling the calm
Of the beautiful countenance, twine round his neck;

Where haply (kind service to Piety due!)
When winter the grove of its mantle bereaves,
Some bird (like our own honoured red-breast) may strew
The desolate Slumberer with moss and with leaves.

FUENTES once harboured the good and the brave,
Nor to her was the dance of soft pleasure unknown;
Her banners for festal enjoyment did wave
While the thrill of her fifes thro' the mountains was blown:

Now gads the wild vine o'er the pathless ascent;—
O silence of Nature, how deep is thy sway,
When the whirlwind of human destruction is spent,
Our tumults appeased, and our strifes passed away!

XXIII

THE CHURCH OF SAN SALVADOR

SEEN FROM THE LAKE OF LUGANO

This Church was almost destroyed by lightning a few years ago, but the altar and the image of the Patron Saint were untouched. The Mount, upon the summit of which the Church is built, stands amid the intricacies of the Lake of Lugano; and is, from a hundred points of view, its principal ornament, rising to the height of 2000 feet, and on one side nearly perpendicular. The ascent is toilsome; but the traveller who performs it will be amply rewarded. Splendid fertility, rich woods and dazzling waters, seclusion and confinement of view contrasted with sealike extent of plain fading into the sky; and this again, in an opposite quarter, with an horizon of the loftiest and boldest Alps—unite in composing a prospect more diversified by magnificence, beauty, and sublimity, than perhaps any other point in Europe, of so inconsiderable an elevation, commands.

THOU sacred Pile! whose turrets rise
From yon steep mountain's loftiest stage,
Guarded by lone San Salvador;
Sink (if thou must) as heretofore,
To sulphurous bolts a sacrifice,
But ne'er to human rage!

On Horeb's top, on Sinai, deigned
To rest the universal Lord:
Why leap the fountains from their cells
Where everlasting Bounty dwells?—
That, while the Creature is sustained,
His God may be adored.

Cliffs, fountains, rivers, seasons, times—
Let all remind the soul of heaven;
Our slack devotion needs them all;
And Faith—so oft of sense the thrall,
While she, by aid of Nature, climbs—
May hope to be forgiven.

Glory, and patriotic Love,
And all the Pomps of this frail "spot
Which men call Earth," have yearned to seek,
Associate with the simply meek,
Religion in the sainted grove,
And in the hallowed grot.

Thither, in time of adverse shocks,
Of fainting hopes and backward wills,
Did mighty Tell repair of old—
A Hero cast in Nature's mould,
Deliverer of the stedfast rocks
And of the ancient hills!

He, too, of battle-martyrs chief!
Who, to recall his daunted peers,
For victory shaped an open space,
By gathering with a wide embrace,
Into his single breast, a sheaf
Of fatal Austrian spears.[1]

XXIV

THE ITALIAN ITINERANT AND THE SWISS GOATHERD.

PART I

I

NOW that the farewell tear is dried,
Heaven prosper thee, be hope thy guide
Hope be thy guide, adventurous Boy;
The wages of thy travel, joy!
Whether for London bound—to trill
Thy mountain notes with simple skill;
Or on thy head to poise a show
Of Images in seemly row;
The graceful form of milk-white Steed,
Or Bird that soared with Ganymede;
Or through our hamlets thou wilt bear
The sightless Milton, with his hair
Around his placid temples curled;
And Shakspeare at his side—a freight,
If clay could think and mind were weight,
For him who bore the world!
Hope be thy guide, adventurous Boy;
The wages of thy travel, joy!

II

But thou, perhaps, (alert as free
Though serving sage philosophy)
Wilt ramble over hill and dale,
A Vender of the well-wrought Scale,
Whose sentient tube instructs to time
A purpose to a fickle clime:
Whether thou choose this useful part,
Or minister to finer art,

---

[1] Arnold Winkelried, at the battle of Sempach, broke an Austrian phalanx in this manner. The event is one of the most famous in the annals of Swiss heroism; and pictures and prints of it are frequent throughout the country.

Though robbed of many a cherished dream,
And crossed by many a shattered scheme,
What stirring wonders wilt thou see
In the proud Isle of liberty!
Yet will the Wanderer sometimes pine
With thoughts which no delights can chase,
Recall a Sister's last embrace,
His Mother's neck entwine;
Nor shall forget the Maiden coy
That *would* have loved the bright-haired Boy!

III

My Song, encouraged by the grace
That beams from his ingenuous face,
For this Adventurer scruples not
To prophesy a golden lot;
Due recompence, and safe return
To Como's steeps—his happy bourne!
Where he, aloft in garden glade,
Shall tend, with his own dark-eyed Maid,
The towering maize, and prop the twig
That ill supports the luscious fig;
Or feed his eye in paths sun-proof
With purple of the trellis-roof,
That through the jealous leaves escapes
From Cadenabbia's pendent grapes.
—Oh might he tempt that Goatherd-child
To share his wanderings! him whose look
Even yet my heart can scarcely brook,
So touchingly he smiled—
As with a rapture caught from heaven—
For unasked alms in pity given.

Part II

I

With nodding plumes, and lightly drest
Like foresters in leaf-green vest,
The Helvetian Mountaineers, on ground
For Tell's dread archery renowned,
Before the target stood—to claim
The guerdon of the steadiest aim.
Loud was the rifle-gun's report—
A startling thunder quick and short!
But, flying through the heights around,
Echo prolonged a tell-tale sound
Of hearts and hands alike "prepared
The treasures they enjoy to guard!"
And, if there be a favoured hour
When Heroes are allowed to quit
The tomb, and on the clouds to sit
With tutelary power,
On their Descendants shedding grace—
This was the hour, and that the place.

II

But Truth inspired the Bards of old
When of an iron age they told,
Which to unequal laws gave birth,
And drove Astræa from the earth.
—A gentle Boy (perchance with blood
As noble as the best endued,
But seemingly a Thing despised;
Even by the sun and air unprized;
For not a tinge or flowery streak
Appeared upon his tender cheek)
Heart-deaf to those rebounding notes,
Apart, beside his silent goats,
Sate watching in a forest shed,
Pale, raggèd, with bare feet and head;
Mute as the snow upon the hill,
And, as the saint he prays to, still.
Ah, what avails heroic deed?
What liberty? if no defence
Be won for feeble Innocence.
Father of all! though wilful Manhood read
His punishment in soul-distress,
Grant to the morn of life its natural blessedness!

XXV

THE LAST SUPPER

BY LEONARDO DA VINCI, IN THE REFECTORY OF THE CONVENT OF MARIA DELLA GRAZIA—MILAN[1]

Tho' searching damps and many an envious flaw
Have marred this Work; the calm ethereal grace,
The love deep-seated in the Saviour's face,
The mercy, goodness, have not failed to awe
The Elements; as they do melt and thaw
The heart of the Beholder—and erase
(At least for one rapt moment) every trace
Of disobedience to the primal law.
The annunciation of the dreadful truth
Made to the Twelve, survives: lip, forehead, cheek,
And hand reposing on the board in ruth
Of what it utters, while the unguilty seek
Unquestionable meanings—still bespeak
A labour worthy of eternal youth!

---

[1] See Note.

XXVI

THE ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, 1820

HIGH on her speculative tower
Stood Science waiting for the hour
When Sol was destined to endure
That darkening of his radiant face
Which Superstition strove to chase,
Erewhile, with rites impure.

Afloat beneath Italian skies,
Through regions fair as Paradise
We gaily passed,—till Nature wrought
A silent and unlooked-for change,
That checked the desultory range
Of joy and sprightly thought.

Where'er was dipped the toiling oar,
The waves danced round us as before,
As lightly, though of altered hue,
'Mid recent coolness, such as falls
At noontide from umbrageous walls
That screen the morning dew.

No vapour stretched its wings; no cloud
Cast far or near a murky shroud;
The sky an azure field displayed;
'Twas sunlight sheathed and gently charmed,
Of all its sparkling rays disarmed,
And as in slumber laid,—

Or something night and day between,
Like moonshine—but the hue was green;
Still moonshine, without shadow, spread
On jutting rock, and curvèd shore,
Where gazed the peasant from his door
And on the mountain's head.

It tinged the Julian steeps—it lay,
Lugano! on thy ample bay;
The solemnizing veil was drawn
O'er villas, terraces, and towers;
To Albogasio's olive bowers,
Porlezza's verdant lawn.

But Fancy with the speed of fire
Hath passed to Milan's loftiest spire,
And there alights 'mid that aërial host
Of Figures human and divine,[1]
White as the snows of Apennine
Indúrated by frost.

Awe-stricken she beholds the array
That guards the Temple night and day;
Angels she sees—that might from heaven have flown,
And Virgin-saints, who not in vain
Have striven by purity to gain
The beatific crown—

Sees long-drawn files, concentric rings
Each narrowing above each;—the wings,
The uplifted palms, the silent marble lips
The starry zone of sovereign height[2]—
All steeped in this portentous light!
All suffering dim eclipse!

Thus after Man had fallen (if aught
These perishable spheres have wrought
May with that issue be compared)
Throngs of celestial visages,
Darkening like water in the breeze,
A holy sadness shared.

Lo! while I speak, the labouring Sun
His glad deliverance has begun:
The cypress waves her sombre plume
More cheerily; and town and tower,
The vineyard and the olive-bower,
Their lustre re-assume!

O Ye, who guard and grace my home
While in far-distant lands we roam,
What countenance hath this Day put on for you?
While we looked round with favoured eyes,
Did sullen mists hide lake and skies
And mountains from your view?

Or was it given you to behold
Like vision, pensive though not cold,
From the smooth breast of gay Winandermere?
Saw ye the soft yet awful veil
Spread over Grasmere's lovely dale,
Helvellyn's brow severe?

I ask in vain—and know far less
If sickness, sorrow, or distress
Have spared my Dwelling to this hour;
Sad blindness! but ordained to prove
Our faith in Heaven's unfailing love
And all-controlling power.

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[1] See Note.

[2] Above the highest circle of figures is a zone of metallic stars.

XXVII

THE THREE COTTAGE GIRLS

I

How blest the Maid whose heart—yet free
From Love's uneasy sovereignty—
Beats with a fancy running high,
Her simple cares to magnify;
Whom Labour, never urged to toil,
Hath cherished on a healthful soil;
Who knows not pomp, who heeds not pelf;
Whose heaviest sin it is to look
Askance upon her pretty Self
Reflected in some crystal brook;
Whom grief hath spared—who sheds no tear
But in sweet pity; and can hear
Another's praise from envy clear.

II

Such (but O lavish Nature! why
That dark unfathomable eye,
Where lurks a Spirit that replies
To stillest mood of softest skies,
Yet hints at peace to be o'erthrown,
Another's first, and then her own?)
Such, haply, yon ITALIAN Maid,
Our Lady's laggard Votaress,
Halting beneath the chestnut shade
To accomplish there her loveliness:
Nice aid maternal fingers lend;
A Sister serves with slacker hand;
Then, glittering like a star, she joins the festal band.

III

How blest (if truth may entertain
Coy fancy with a bolder strain)
The HELVETIAN Girl—who daily braves,
In her light skiff, the tossing waves,
And quits the bosom of the deep
Only to climb the rugged steep!
—Say whence that modulated shout!
From Wood-nymph of Diana's throng?
Or does the greeting to a rout
Of giddy Bacchanals belong?
Jubilant outcry! rock and glade
Resounded—but the voice obeyed
The breath of an Helvetian Maid.

IV

Her beauty dazzles the thick wood;
Her courage animates the flood;
Her steps the elastic greensward meets
Returning unreluctant sweets;
The mountains (as ye heard) rejoice
Aloud, saluted by her voice!
Blithe Paragon of Alpine grace,
Be as thou art—for through thy veins
The blood of Heroes runs its race!
And nobly wilt thou brook the chains
That, for the virtuous, Life prepares;
The fetters which the Matron wears;
The patriot Mother's weight of anxious cares!

V

[1] "Sweet HIGHLAND Girl! a very shower
Of beauty was thy earthly dower,"
When thou didst flit before mine eyes,
Gay Vision under sullen skies,
While Hope and Love around thee played,
Near the rough falls of Inversneyd!
Have they, who nursed the blossom, seen
No breach of promise in the fruit?
Was joy, in following joy, as keen
As grief can be in grief's pursuit?
When youth had flown did hope still bless
Thy goings—or the cheerfulness
Of innocence survive to mitigate distress?

VI

But from our course why turn—to tread
A way with shadows overspread;
Where what we gladliest would believe
Is feared as what may most deceive?
Bright Spirit, not with amaranth crowned
But heath-bells from thy native ground,
Time cannot thin thy flowing hair,
Nor take one ray of light from Thee;
For in my Fancy thou dost share
The gift of immortality;
And there shall bloom, with Thee allied,
The Votaress by Lugano's side;
And that intrepid Nymph, on Uri's steep descried!

XXVIII

THE COLUMN INTENDED BY BUONAPARTE FOR A TRIUMPHAL EDIFICE IN MILAN, NOW LYING BY THE WAY-SIDE IN THE SIMPLON PASS

AMBITION—following down this far-famed slope

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[1] See address to a Highland Girl, p. 191.

Her Pioneer, the snow-dissolving Sun,
While clarions prate of kingdoms to be won—
Perchance, in future ages, here may stop;
Taught to mistrust her flattering horoscope
By admonition from this prostrate Stone!
Memento uninscribed of Pride o'erthrown;
Vanity's hieroglyphic; a choice trope
In Fortune's rhetoric. Daughter of the Rock,
Rest where thy course was stayed by Power divine!
The Soul transported sees, from hint of thine,
Crimes which the great Avenger's hand provoke,
Hears combats whistling o'er the ensanguined heath:
What groans! what shrieks! what quietness in death.

XXIX

STANZAS

COMPOSED IN THE SIMPLON PASS

VALLOMBROSA! I longed in thy shadiest wood
To slumber, reclined on the moss-covered floor,
To listen to ANIO'S precipitous flood,
When the stillness of evening hath deepened its roar;
To range through the Temples of PÆSTUM, to muse
In POMPEII preserved by her burial in earth;
On pictures to gaze where they drank in their hues;
And murmur sweet songs on the ground of their birth.

The beauty of Florence, the grandeur of Rome,
Could I leave them unseen, and not yield to regret?
With a hope (and no more) for a season to come,
Which ne'er may discharge the magnificent debt?
Thou fortunate Region! whose Greatness inurned
Awoke to new life from its ashes and dust;
Twice-glorified fields! if in sadness I turned
From your infinite marvels, the sadness was just.

Now, risen ere the light-footed Chamois retires
From dew-sprinkled grass to heights guarded with snow,
Toward the mists that hang over the land of my Sires,
From the climate of myrtles contented I go.
My thoughts become bright like yon edging of Pines
On the steep's lofty verge: how it blackened the air!
But, touched from behind by the Sun, it now shines
With threads that seem part of his own silver hair.

Though the toil of the way with dear Friends we divide,
Though by the same zephyr our temples be fanned
As we rest in the cool orange-bower side by side,
A yearning survives which few hearts shall withstand:
Each step hath its value while homeward we move;—
O joy when the girdle of England appears!
What moment in life is so conscious of love,
Of love in the heart made more happy by tears?

XXX

ECHO, UPON THE GEMMI

WHAT beast of chase hath broken from the cover?
Stern GEMMI listens to as full a cry,
As multitudinous a harmony
Of sounds as rang the heights of Latmos over,
When, from the soft couch of her sleeping Lover,
Up-starting, Cynthia skimmed the mountain dew
In keen pursuit—and gave, where'er she flew,

Impetuous motion to the Stars above her.
A solitary Wolf-dog, ranging on
Through the bleak concave, wakes this wondrous chime
Of aëry voices locked in unison,—
Faint—far-off—near—deep—solemn and sublime!—
So, from the body of one guilty deed,
A thousand ghostly fears, and haunting thoughts, proceed!

XXXI

PROCESSIONS

SUGGESTED ON A SABBATH MORNING IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNY

To appease the Gods; or public thanks to yield;
Or to solicit knowledge of events,
Which in her breast Futurity concealed;
And that the past might have its true intents
Feelingly told by living monuments—
Mankind of yore were prompted to devise
Rites such as yet Persepolis presents
Graven on her cankered walls, solemnities
That moved in long array before admiring eyes.

The Hebrews thus, carrying in joyful state
Thick boughs of palm, and willows from the brook,
Marched round the altar—to commemorate
How, when their course they through the desert took,
Guided by signs which ne'er the sky forsook,
They lodged in leafy tents and cabins low;
Green boughs were borne, while, for the blast that shook
Down to the earth the walls of Jericho,
Shouts rise, and storms of sound from lifted trumpets blow!

And thus, in order, 'mid the sacred grove
Fed in the Libyan waste by gushing wells,
The priests and damsels of Ammonian Jove
Provoked responses with shrill canticles;
While, in a ship begirt with silver bells,
They round his altar bore the hornèd God,
Old Cham, the solar Deity, who dwells
Aloft, yet in a tilting vessel rode,
When universal sea the mountains overflowed.

Why speak of Roman Pomps? the haughty claims
Of Chiefs triumphant after ruthless wars;
The feast of Neptune—and the Cereal Games,
With images, and crowns, and empty cars;
The dancing Salii—on the shields of Mars
Smiting with fury; and a deeper dread
Scattered on all sides by the hideous jars
Of Corybantian cymbals, while the head
Of Cybelè was seen, sublimely turreted!

At length a Spirit more subdued and soft
Appeared—to govern Christian pageantries:
The Cross, in calm procession, borne aloft
Moved to the chant of sober litanies.
Even such, this day, came wafted on the breeze
From a long train—in hooded vestments fair
Enwrapt—and winding, between Alpine trees
Spiry and dark, around their House of prayer,
Below the icy bed of bright ARGENTIERE.

Still in the vivid freshness of a dream,
The pageant haunts me as it met our eyes!
Still, with those white-robed Shapes—a living Stream,
The glacier Pillars join in solemn guise[1]
For the same service, by mysterious ties;
Numbers exceeding credible account
Of number, pure and silent Votaries
Issuing or issued from a wintry fount;
The impenetrable heart of that exalted Mount!

They, too, who send so far a holy gleam
While they the Church engird with motion slow,
A product of that awful Mountain seem,
Poured from his vaults of everlasting snow;
Not virgin lilies marshalled in bright row,
Not swans descending with the stealthy tide,
A livelier sisterly resemblance show

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[1] See Note.

Than the fair Forms, that in long order glide,
Bear to the glacier band—those Shapes aloft descried.
Trembling, I look upon the secret springs
Of that licentious craving in the mind
To act the God among external things,
To bind, on apt suggestion, or unbind;
And marvel not that antique Faith inclined
To crowd the world with metamorphosis,
Vouchsafed in pity or in wrath assigned;
Such insolent temptations wouldst thou miss,
Avoid these sights; nor brood o'er Fable's dark abyss!

XXXII

ELEGIAC STANZAS

The lamented Youth whose untimely death gave occasion to these elegiac verses, was Frederick William Goddard, from Boston in North America. He was in his twentieth year, and had resided for some time with a clergyman in the neighbourhood of Geneva for the completion of his education. Accompanied by a fellow-pupil, a native of Scotland, he had just set out on a Swiss tour when it was his misfortune to fall in with a Friend of mine who was hastening to join our party. The travellers, after spending a day together on the road from Berne and at Soleure, took leave of each other at night, the young men having intended to proceed directly to Zurich. But early in the morning my friend found his new acquaintances, who were informed of the object of his journey, and the friends he was in pursuit of, equipped to accompany him. We met at Lucerne the succeeding evening, and Mr. G. and his fellow-student became in consequence our travelling companions for a couple of days. We ascended the Righi together; and, after contemplating the sunrise from that noble mountain, we separated at an hour and on a spot well suited to the parting of those who were to meet no more. Our party descended through the valley of our Lady of the Snow, and our late companions, to Art. We had hoped to meet in a few weeks at Geneva; but on the third succeeding day (on the 21st of August) Mr. Goddard perished, being overset in a boat while crossing the lake of Zurich. His companion saved himself by swimming, and was hospitably received in the mansion of a Swiss gentleman (M. Keller) situated on the eastern coast of the lake. The corpse of poor Goddard was cast ashore on the estate of the same gentleman, who generously performed all the rites of hospitality which could be rendered to the dead as well as to the living. He caused a handsome mural monument to be erected in the Church of Küsnacht, which records the premature fate of the young American, and on the shores too of the lake the traveller may read an inscription pointing out the spot where the body was deposited by the waves.

LULLED by the sound of pastoral bells,
Rude Nature's Pilgrims did we go,
From the dread summit of the Queen[1]
Of mountains, through a deep ravine,
Where, in her holy chapel, dwells
"Our Lady of the Snow."

The sky was blue, the air was mild;
Free were the streams and green the bowers;
As if, to rough assaults unknown,
The genial spot had *ever* shown
A countenance that as sweetly smiled—
The face of summer-hours.

And we were gay, our hearts at ease;
With pleasure dancing through the frame
We journeyed; all we knew of care—
Our path that straggled here and there;
Of trouble—but the fluttering breeze;
Of Winter—but a name.

If foresight could have rent the veil
Of three short days—but hush—no more!
Calm is the grave, and calmer none
Than that to which thy cares are gone,
Thou Victim of the stormy gale;
Asleep on ZURICH'S shore!

O GODDARD! what art thou?—a name—
A sunbeam followed by a shade!
Nor more, for aught that time supplies,
The great, the experienced, and the wise:
Too much from this frail earth we claim,
And therefore are betrayed.

We met, while festive mirth ran wild,
Where, from a deep lake's mighty urn,
Forth slips, like an enfranchised slave,
A sea-green river, proud to lave,
With current swift and undefiled,
The towers of old LUCERNE.

We parted upon solemn ground
Far-lifted towards the unfading sky;

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[1] Mount Righi—Regina Montium.

But all our thoughts were *then* of Earth,
That gives to common pleasures birth;
And nothing in our hearts we found
That prompted even a sigh.

Fetch, sympathising Powers of air,
Fetch, ye that post o'er seas and lands,
Herbs, moistened by Virginian dew,
A most untimely grave to strew,
Whose turf may never know the care
Of *kindred* human hands!

Beloved by every gentle Muse
He left his Transatlantic home:
Europe, a realised romance,
Had opened on his eager glance;
What present bliss!—what golden views!
What stores for years to come!

Though lodged within no vigorous frame,
His soul her daily tasks renewed,
Blithe as the lark on sun-gilt wings
High poised—or as the wren that sings
In shady places, to proclaim
Her modest gratitude.

Not vain is sadly-uttered praise;
The words of truth's memorial vow
Are sweet as morning fragrance shed
From flowers 'mid GOLDAU'S ruins bred;
As evening's fondly-lingering rays,
On RIGHI'S silent brow.

Lamented Youth! to thy cold clay
Fit obsequies the Stranger paid;
And piety shall guard the Stone
Which hath not left the spot unknown
Where the wild waves resigned their prey—
And *that* which marks thy bed.

And, when thy Mother weeps for Thee,
Lost Youth! a solitary Mother;
This tribute from a casual Friend
A not unwelcome aid may lend,
To feed the tender luxury,
The rising pang to smother.[1]

XXXIII

SKY-PROSPECT—FROM THE PLAIN OF FRANCE

Lo! in the burning west, the craggy nape
Of a proud Ararat! and, thereupon,
The Ark, her melancholy voyage done!
Yon rampant cloud mimics a lion's shape;
There, combats a huge crocodile—agape
A golden spear to swallow! and that brown
And massy grove, so near yon blazing town,
Stirs and recedes—destruction to escape!
Yet all is harmless—as the Elysian shades
Where Spirits dwell in undisturbed repose—
Silently disappears, or quickly fades:
Meek Nature's evening comment on the shows
That for oblivion take their daily birth
From all the fuming vanities of Earth!

XXXIV

ON BEING STRANDED NEAR THE HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE[2]

WHY cast ye back upon the Gallic shore,
Ye furious waves! a patriotic Son
Of England—who in hope her coast had won,
His project crowned, his pleasant travel o'er?
Well—let him pace this noted beach once more,
That gave the Roman his triumphal shells;
That saw the Corsican his cap and bells
Haughtily shake, a dreaming Conqueror!—
Enough: my Country's cliffs I can behold,
And proudly think, beside the chafing sea,
Of checked ambition, tyranny controlled,
And folly cursed with endless memory:
These local recollections ne'er can cloy;
Such ground I from my very heart enjoy!

XXXV

AFTER LANDING—THE VALLEY OF DOVER

NOV. 1820

WHERE be the noisy followers of the game
Which faction breeds; the turmoil where? that passed

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[1] The persuasion here expressed was not groundless. The first human consolation that the afflicted Mother felt, was derived from this tribute to her son's memory, a fact which the author learned, at his own residence, from her Daughter, who visited Europe some years afterwards.—Goldau is one of the villages desolated by the fall of part of the Mountain Rossberg.

[2] See Note.

Through Europe, echoing from the newsman's blast,
And filled our hearts with grief for England's shame.
Peace greets us;—rambling on without an aim
We mark majestic herds of cattle, free
To ruminate,[1] couched on the grassy lea;
And hear far-off the mellow horn proclaim
The Season's harmless pastime. Ruder sound
Stirs not; enrapt I gaze with strange delight,
While consciousnesses, not to be disowned,
Here only serve a feeling to invite
That lifts the spirit to a calmer height,
And makes this rural stillness more profound.

XXXVI

AT DOVER

For the impressions on which this sonnet turns, I am indebted to the experience of my daughter, during her residence at Dover with our dear friend, Miss Fenwick.

From the Pier's head, musing, and with increase
Of wonder, I have watched this sea-side Town,
Under the white cliff's battlemented crown,
Hushed to a depth of more than Sabbath peace:
The streets and quays are thronged, but why disown
Their natural utterance: whence this strange release
From social noise—silence elsewhere unknown?—
A Spirit whispered, "Let all wonder cease;
Ocean's o'erpowering murmurs have set free
Thy sense from pressure of life's common din;
As the dread Voice that speaks from out the sea
Of God's eternal Word, the Voice of Time
Doth deaden, shocks of tumult, shrieks of crime,
The shouts of folly, and the groans of sin."

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[1] See Note.

XXXVII

DESULTORY STANZAS

UPON RECEIVING THE PRECEDING SHEETS FROM THE PRESS

Is then the final page before me spread,
Nor further outlet left to mind or heart?
Presumptuous Book! too forward to be read,
How can I give thee licence to depart?
One tribute more: unbidden feelings start
Forth from their coverts; slighted objects rise;
My spirit is the scene of such wild art
As on Parnassus rules, when lightning flies,
Visibly leading on the thunder's harmonies.

All that I saw returns upon my view,
All that I heard comes back upon my ear,
All that I felt this moment doth renew;
And where the foot with no unmanly fear
Recoiled—and wings alone could travel—there
I move at ease; and meet contending themes
That press upon me, crossing the career
Of recollections vivid as the dreams
Of midnight,—cities, plains, forests, and mighty streams.

Where Mortal never breathed I dare to sit
Among the interior Alps, gigantic crew,
Who triumphed o'er diluvian power!—and yet
What are they but a wreck and residue,
Whose only business is to perish?—true
To which sad course, these wrinkled Sons of Time
Labour their proper greatness to subdue;
Speaking of death alone, beneath a clime
Where life and rapture flow in plenitude sublime.

Fancy hath flung for me an airy bridge
Across thy long deep Valley, furious Rhone!
Arch that *here* rests upon the granite ridge
Of Monte Rosa—*there* on frailer stone
Of secondary birth, the Jung-frau's cone;
And, from that arch, down-looking on the Vale
The aspect I behold of every zone;
A sea of foliage, tossing with the gale,
Blithe Autumn's purple crown, and Winter's icy mail!

Far as ST. MAURICE, from yon eastern FORKS,[1]
Down the main avenue my sight can range:
And all its branchy vales, and all that lurks
Within them, church, and town, and hut, and grange,
For my enjoyment meet in vision strange;
Snows, torrents;—to the region's utmost bound,
Life, Death, in amicable interchange;—
But list! the avalanche—the hush profound
That follows—yet more awful than that awful sound!

Is not the chamois suited to his place?
The eagle worthy of her ancestry?
—Let Empires fall; but ne'er shall Ye disgrace
Your noble birthright, ye that occupy
Your council-seats beneath the open sky,
On Sarnen's Mount,[2] there judge of fit and right,
In simple democratic majesty;
Soft breezes fanning your rough brows—the might
And purity of nature spread before your sight!

From this appropriate Court, renowned LUCERNE
Calls me to pace her honoured Bridge[2]—that cheers
The Patriot's heart with pictures rude and stern,
An uncouth Chronicle of glorious years.
Like portraiture, from loftier source, endears
That work of kindred frame, which spans the lake
Just at the point of issue, where it fears
The form and motion of a stream to take;
Where it begins to stir, *yet* voiceless as a snake.

Volumes of sound, from the Cathedral rolled,
This long-roofed Vista penetrate—but see,
One after one, its tablets, that unfold
The whole design of Scripture history;
From the first tasting of the fatal Tree,
Till the bright Star appeared in eastern skies,
Announcing, ONE was born mankind to free;
His acts, his wrongs, his final sacrifice;
Lessons for every heart, a Bible for all eyes.

Our pride misleads, our timid likings kill.
—Long may these homely Works devised of old,
These simple efforts of Helvetian skill,
Aid, with congenial influence, to uphold
The State,—the Country's destiny to mould;
Turning, for them who pass, the common dust
Of servile opportunity to gold;
Filling the soul with sentiments august—
The beautiful, the brave, the holy, and the just!

No more; Time halts not in his noiseless march—
Nor turns, nor winds, as doth the liquid flood;
Life slips from underneath us, like that arch
Of airy workmanship whereon we stood,
Earth stretched below, heaven in our neighbourhood.
Go forth, my little Book! pursue thy way;
Go forth, and please the gentle and the good;
Nor be a whisper stifled, if it say
That treasures, yet untouched, may grace some future Lay.

THE RIVER DUDDON[3]

A SERIES OF SONNETS

1820.

It is with the little river Duddon as it is with most other rivers, Ganges and Nile not excepted,—many springs might claim the honour of being its head. In my own fancy I have fixed its rise near the noted Shire-stones placed at the meeting-point of the counties, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire. They stand by the wayside on the top of the Wrynose Pass, and it used to be reckoned a proud thing to say that, by touching them at the same time with feet and hands, one had been in the three counties at once. At what point of its course the stream takes the name of Duddon I do not know. I first became acquainted with the Duddon, as I have good reason to remember, in early boyhood. Upon the banks of the Derwent I had learnt to be very fond of angling. Fish abound in that large river; not so in the small streams in the neighbourhood of Hawkshead; and I fell into the common delusion that the farther from home the better sport would be had. Accordingly, one day I attached myself to a person living in the neighbourhood of Hawkshead, who was going to try his fortune as an angler near the source of the Duddon. We fished a great part of the day with very sorry success, the rain pouring torrents, and long before we got home I was worn out with fatigue; and, if the good man had not carried me on his back, I must have lain down under the best shelter I could find. Little did I think then it would be my lot to celebrate, in a strain of love and admiration, the stream which for many years I never thought of without recollections of disappointment and distress.

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[1] At the head of the Vallais. See Note.

[2] See Note.

[3] See Note.

During my college vacation, and two or three years afterwards, before taking my Bachelor's degree, I was several times resident in the house of a near relative who lived in the small town of Broughton. I passed many delightful hours upon the banks of this river, which becomes an estuary about a mile from that place. The remembrances of that period are the subject of the 21st Sonnet. The subject of the 27th is in fact taken from a tradition belonging to Rydal Hall, which once stood, as is believed, upon a rocky and woody hill on the right hand as you go from Rydal to Ambleside, and was deserted from the superstitious fear here described, and the present site fortunately chosen instead. The present Hall was erected by Sir Michael le Fleming, and it may be hoped that at some future time there will be an edifice more worthy of so beautiful a position. With regard to the 30th Sonnet it is odd enough that this imagination was realised in the year 1840, when I made a tour through that district with my wife and daughter, Miss Fenwick and her niece, and Mr. and Miss Quillinan. Before our return from Seathwaite chapel the party separated. Mrs. Wordsworth, while most of us went further up the stream, chose an opposite direction, having told us that we should overtake her on our way to Ulpha. But she was tempted out of the main road to ascend a rocky eminence near it, thinking it impossible we should pass without seeing her. This, however, unfortunately happened, and then ensued vexation and distress, especially to me, which I should be ashamed to have recorded, for I lost my temper entirely. Neither I nor those that were with me saw her again till we reached the Inn at Broughton, seven miles. This may perhaps in some degree excuse my irritability on the occasion, for I could not but think she had been much to blame. It appeared, however, on explanation, that she had remained on the rock, calling out and waving her handkerchief as we were passing, in order that we also might ascend and enjoy a prospect which had much charmed her. "But on we went, her signals proving vain." How then could she reach Broughton before us? When we found she had not gone on before to Ulpha Kirk, Mr. Quillinan went back in one of the carriages in search of her. He met her on the road, took her up, and by a shorter way conveyed her to Broughton, where we were all reunited and spent a happy evening.

I have many affecting remembrances connected with this stream. Those I forbear to mention; especially things that occurred on its banks during the later part of that visit to the seaside of which the former part is detailed in my "Epistle to Sir George Beaumont."

The River Duddon rises upon Wrynose Fell, on the confines of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire; and, having served as a boundary to the two last counties for the space of about twenty-five miles, enters the Irish Sea, between the Isle of Walney and the Lordship of Millum.

To

THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH

(WITH THE SONNETS TO THE RIVER DUDDON, AND OTHER POEMS IN THIS COLLECTION, 1820)

THE Minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage-eaves;
While, smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings:
Keen was the air, but could not freeze,
Nor check, the music of the strings;
So stout and hardy were the band
That scraped the chords with strenuous hand;

And who but listened?—till was paid
Respect to every Inmate's claim:
The greeting given, the music played,
In honour of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And "merry Christmas" wished to all!

O Brother! I revere the choice
That took thee from thy native hills;
And it is given thee to rejoice:
Though public care full often tills
(Heaven only witness of the toil)
A barren and ungrateful soil.

Yet, would that Thou, with me and mine,
Hadst heard this never-failing rite;
And seen on other faces shine
A true revival of the light
Which Nature and these rustic Powers,
In simple childhood, spread through ours.

For pleasure hath not ceased to wait
On these expected annual rounds;
Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate
Call forth the unelaborate sounds,
Or they are offered at the door
That guards the lowliest of the poor.

How touching, when, at midnight, sweep
Snow-muffled winds, and all is dark,
To hear—and sink again to sleep!
Or, at an earlier call, to mark,
By blazing fire, the still suspense
Of self-complacent innocence;

The mutual nod,—the grave disguise
Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er;
And some unbidden tears that rise
For names once heard, and heard no more;
Tears brightened by the serenade
For infant in the cradle laid.

Ah! not for emerald fields alone,
With ambient streams more pure and bright
Than fabled Cytherea's zone
Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,
Is to my heart of hearts endeared
The ground where we were born and reared!

Hail, ancient Manners! sure defence,
Where they survive, of wholesome laws;
Remnants of love whose modest sense
Thus into narrow room withdraws;
Hail, Usages of pristine mould,
And ye that guard them, Mountains old!

Bear with me, Brother! quench the thought
That slights this passion, or condemns;
If thee fond Fancy ever brought
From the proud margin of the Thames,
And Lambeth's venerable towers,
To humbler streams, and greener bowers.

Yes, they can make, who fail to find,
Short leisure even in busiest days;
Moments, to cast a look behind,
And profit by those kindly rays
That through the clouds do sometimes steal,
And all the far-off past reveal.

Hence, while the imperial City's din
Beats frequent on thy satiate ear,
A pleased attention I may win
To agitations less severe,
That neither overwhelm nor cloy,
But fill the hollow vale with joy!

I

NOT envying Latian shades—if yet they throw
A grateful coolness round that crystal Spring,
Blandusia, prattling as when long ago
The Sabine Bard was moved her praise to sing;
Careless of flowers that in perennial blow
Round the moist marge of Persian fountains cling;
Heedless of Alpine torrents thundering
Through ice-built arches radiant as heaven's bow;
I seek the birthplace of a native Stream.—
All hail, ye mountains! hail, thou morning light!
Better to breathe at large on this clear height
Than toil in needless sleep from dream to dream:
Pure flow the verse, pure, vigorous, free, and bright,
For Duddon, long-loved Duddon, is my theme!

II

CHILD of the clouds! remote from every taint
Of sordid industry thy lot is cast;
Thine are the honours of the lofty waste
Not seldom, when with heat the valleys faint,
Thy handmaid Frost with spangled tissue quaint
Thy cradle decks;—to chant thy birth, thou hast
No meaner Poet than the whistling Blast,
And Desolation is thy Patron-saint!
She guards thee, ruthless Power! who would not spare
Those mighty forests, once the bison's screen,
Where stalked the huge deer to his shaggy lair[1]
Through paths and alleys roofed with darkest green;
Thousands of years before the silent air
Was pierced by whizzing shaft of hunter keen!

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[1] The deer alluded to is the Leigh, a gigantic species long since extinct.

III

How shall I paint thee?—Be this naked stone
My seat, while I give way to such intent;
Pleased could my verse, a speaking monument,
Make to the eyes of men thy features known.
But as of all those tripping lambs not one
Outruns his fellows, so hath Nature lent
To thy beginning nought that doth present
Peculiar ground for hope to build upon.
To dignify the spot that gives thee birth,
No sign of hoar Antiquity's esteem
Appears, and none of modern Fortune's care;
Yet thou thyself hast round thee shed a gleam
Of brilliant moss, instinct with freshness rare;
Prompt offering to thy Foster-mother, Earth!

IV

Take, cradled Nursling of the mountain, take
This parting glance, no negligent adieu!
A Protean change seems wrought while I pursue
The curves, a loosely-scattered chain doth make;
Or rather thou appear'st a glistering snake,
Silent, and to the gazer's eye untrue,
Thridding with sinuous lapse the rushes, through
Dwarf willows gliding, and by ferny brake.
Starts from a dizzy steep the undaunted Rill
Robed instantly in garb of snow-white foam;
And laughing dares the Adventurer, who hath clomb
So high, a rival purpose to fulfil;
Else let the dastard backward wend, and roam,
Seeking less bold achievement, where he will!

V

Sole listener, Duddon! to the breeze that played
With thy clear voice, I caught the fitful sound
Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy mound—
Unfruitful solitudes, that seemed to upbraid
The sun in heaven!—but now, to form a shade
For Thee, green alders have together wound
Their foliage; ashes flung their arms around;
And birch-trees risen in silver colonnade.
And thou hast also tempted here to rise,
'Mid sheltering pines, this Cottage rude and grey;
Whose ruddy children, by the mother's eyes
Carelessly watched, sport through the summer day,
Thy pleased associates:—light as endless May
On infant bosoms lonely Nature lies.

VI

FLOWERS

Ere yet our course was graced with social trees
It lacked not old remains of hawthorn bowers,
Where small birds warbled to their paramours;
And, earlier still, was heard the hum of bees;
I saw them ply their harmless robberies,
And caught the fragrance which the sundry flowers,
Fed by the stream with soft perpetual showers,
Plenteously yielded to the vagrant breeze.
There bloomed the strawberry of the wilderness;
The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire blue,[1]
The thyme her purple, like the blush of Even;
And if the breath of some to no caress
Invited, forth they peeped so fair to view,
All kinds alike seemed favourites of Heaven.

VII

"Change me, some God, into that breathing rose!"
The love-sick Stripling fancifully sighs,
The envied flower beholding, as it lies
On Laura's breast, in exquisite repose;
Or he would pass into her bird, that throws

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[1] See Note.

The darts of song from out its wiry cage;
Enraptured,—could he for himself engage
The thousandth part of what the Nymph bestows;
And what the little careless innocent
Ungraciously receives. Too daring choice!
There are whose calmer mind it would content
To be an unculled floweret of the glen,
Fearless of plough and scythe; or darkling wren
That tunes on Duddon's banks her slender voice.

VIII

WHAT aspect bore the Man who roved or fled,
First of his tribe, to this dark dell—who first
In this pellucid Current slaked his thirst?
What hopes came with him? what designs were spread
Along his path? His unprotected bed
What dreams encompassed? Was the intruder nursed
In hideous usages, and rites accursed,
That thinned the living and disturbed the dead?
No voice replies;—both air and earth are mute;
And Thou, blue Streamlet, murmuring yield'st no more
Than a soft record, that, whatever fruit
Of ignorance thou might'st witness heretofore,
Thy function was to heal and to restore,
To soothe and cleanse, not madden and pollute!

IX

THE STEPPING-STONES

THE struggling Rill insensibly is grown
Into a Brook of loud and stately march,
Crossed ever and anon by plank or arch;
And, for like use, lo! what might seem a zone
Chosen for ornament—stone matched with stone
In studied symmetry, with interspace
For the clear waters to pursue their race
Without restraint. How swiftly have they flown,
Succeeding—still succeeding! Here the Child
Puts, when the high-swoln Flood runs fierce and wild,
His budding courage to the proof; and here
Declining Manhood learns to note the sly
And sure encroachments of infirmity,
Thinking how fast time runs, life's end how near!

X

THE SAME SUBJECT

NOT so that Pair whose youthful spirits dance
With prompt emotion, urging them to pass;
A sweet confusion checks the Shepherd-lass;
Blushing she eyes the dizzy flood askance;
To stop ashamed—too timid to advance;
She ventures once again—another pause!
His outstretched hand He tauntingly withdraws—
She sues for help with piteous utterance!
Chidden she chides again; the thrilling touch
Both feel, when he renews the wished-for aid:
Ah! if their fluttering hearts should stir too much,
Should beat too strongly, both may be betrayed.
The frolic Loves, who, from yon high rock, see
The struggle, clap their wings for victory.

XI

THE FAËRY CHASM

No fiction was it of the antique age:
A sky-blue stone, within this sunless cleft,
Is of the very footmarks unbereft
Which tiny Elves impressed;—on that smooth stage
Dancing with all their brilliant equipage
In secret revels—haply after theft
Of some sweet Babe—Flower stolen, and coarse Weed left
For the distracted Mother to assuage
Her grief with, as she might!—But, where, oh! where

Is traceable a vestige of the notes
That ruled those dances wild in character?—
Deep underground? Or in the upper air,
On the shrill wind of midnight? or where floats
O'er twilight fields the autumnal gossamer?

XII

HINTS FOR THE FANCY

On, loitering Muse—the swift Stream chides us—on!
Albeit his deep-worn channel doth immure
Objects immense portrayed in miniature,
Wild shapes for many a strange comparison!
Niagaras, Alpine passes, and anon
Abodes of Naiads, calm abysses pure,
Bright liquid mansions, fashioned to endure
When the broad oak drops, a leafless skeleton,
And the solidities of mortal pride,
Palace and tower, are crumbled into dust!—
The Bard who walks with Duddon for his guide,
Shall find such toys of fancy thickly set:
Turn from the sight, enamoured Muse—we must;
And, if thou canst, leave them without regret!

XIII

OPEN PROSPECT

Hail to the fields—with Dwellings sprinkled o'er,
And one small hamlet, under a green hill
Clustering, with barn and byre, and spouting mill!
A glance suffices;—should we wish for more,
Gay June would scorn us. But when bleak winds roar
Through the stiff lance-like shoots of pollard ash,
Dread swell of sound! loud as the gusts that lash
The matted forests of Ontario's shore
By wasteful steel unsmitten—then would I
Turn into port; and, reckless of the gale,
Reckless of angry Duddon sweeping by,
While the warm hearth exalts the mantling ale,
Laugh with the generous household heartily
At all the merry pranks of Donnerdale!

XIV

O mountain Stream! the Shepherd and his Cot
Are privileged Inmates of deep solitude;
Nor would the nicest Anchorite exclude
A field or two of brighter green, or plot
Of tillage-ground, that seemeth like a spot
Of stationary sunshine:—thou hast viewed
These only, Duddon! with their paths renewed
By fits and starts, yet this contents thee not.
Thee hath some awful Spirit impelled to leave,
Utterly to desert, the haunts of men,
Though simple thy companions were and few;
And through this wilderness a passage cleave
Attended but by thy own voice, save when
The clouds and fowls of the air thy way pursue! 1806.

XV

From this deep chasm, where quivering sunbeams play
Upon its loftiest crags, mine eyes behold
A gloomy NICHE, capacious, blank, and cold;
A concave free from shrubs and mosses grey;
In semblance fresh, as if, with dire affray,
Some Statue, placed amid these regions old
For tutelary service, thence had rolled,
Startling the flight of timid Yesterday!
Was it by mortals sculptured?—weary slaves
Of slow endeavour! or abruptly cast
Into rude shape by fire, with roaring blast
Tempestuously let loose from central caves?
Or fashioned by the turbulence of waves,
Then, when o'er highest hills the Deluge passed?

XVI

AMERICAN TRADITION

Such fruitless questions may not long beguile
Or plague the fancy 'mid the sculptured shows
Conspicuous yet where Oroonoko flows;
There would the Indian answer with a smile
Aimed at the White Man's ignorance, the while,

Of the GREAT WATERS telling how they rose,
Covered the plains, and, wandering where they chose,
Mounted through every intricate defile,
Triumphant—Inundation wide and deep,
O'er which his Fathers urged, to ridge and steep
Else unapproachable, their buoyant way;
And carved, on mural cliff's undreaded side,
Sun, moon, and stars, and beast of chase or prey;
Whate'er they sought, shunned, loved, or deified![1]

XVII

RETURN

A DARK plume fetch me from yon blasted yew,
Perched on whose top the Danish Raven croaks;
Aloft, the imperial Bird of Rome invokes
Departed ages, shedding where he flew
Loose fragments of wild wailing, that bestrew
The clouds and thrill the chambers of the rocks;
And into silence hush the timorous flocks,
That, calmly couching while the nightly dew
Moistened each fleece, beneath the twinkling stars
Slept amid that lone Camp on Hardknot's height,[2]
Whose Guardians bent the knee to Jove and Mars:
Or, near that mystic Round of Druid frame
Tardily sinking by its proper weight
Deep into patient Earth, from whose smooth breast it came!

XVIII

SEATHWAITE CHAPEL

SACRED Religion! "mother of form and fear,"
Dread arbitress of mutable respect,
New rites ordaining when the old are wrecked,
Or cease to please the fickle worshipper;
Mother of Love! (that name best suits thee here)
Mother of Love! for this deep vale, protect
Truth's holy lamp, pure source of bright effect,
Gifted to purge the vapoury atmosphere
That seeks to stifle it;—as in those days
When this low Pile[3] a Gospel Teacher knew,
Whose good works formed an endless retinue:
A Pastor such as Chaucer's verse portrays;
Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew;
And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless praise!

XIX

TRIBUTARY STREAM

MY frame hath often trembled with delight
When hope presented some far-distant good,
That seemed from heaven descending, like the flood
Of yon pure waters, from their aëry height
Hurrying, with lordly Duddon to unite;
Who, 'mid a world of images imprest
On the calm depth of his transparent breast,
Appears to cherish most that Torrent white,
The fairest, softest, liveliest of them all!
And seldom hath ear listened to a tune
More lulling than the busy hum of Noon,
Swoln by that voice—whose murmur musical
Announces to the thirsty fields a boon
Dewy and fresh, till showers again shall fall.

XX

THE PLAIN OF DONNERDALE

THE old inventive Poets, had they seen,
Or rather felt, the entrancement that detains
Thy waters, Duddon! 'mid these flowery plains—
The still repose, the liquid lapse serene,
Transferred to bowers imperishably green,
Had beautified Elysium! But these chains
Will soon be broken;—a rough course remains,
Rough as the past; where Thou, of placid mien,

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[1] See Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*.

[2] See Note.

[3] See Note.

Innocuous as a firstling of the flock,
And countenanced like a soft cerulean sky,
Shalt change thy temper; and, with many a shock
Given and received in mutual jeopardy,
Dance, like a Bacchanal, from rock to rock,
Tossing her frantic thyrsus wide and high!

XXI

WHENCE that low voice?—A whisper from the heart,
That told of days long past, when here I roved
With friends and kindred tenderly beloved;
Some who had early mandates to depart,
Yet are allowed to steal my path athwart
By Duddon's side; once more do we unite,
Once more, beneath the kind Earth's tranquil light;
And smothered joys into new being start.
From her unworthy seat, the cloudy stall
Of Time, breaks forth triumphant Memory;
Her glistening tresses bound, yet light and free
As golden locks of birch, that rise and fall
On gales that breathe too gently to recall
Aught of the fading year's inclemency!

XXII

TRADITION

A LOVE-LORN Maid, at some far-distant time,
Came to this hidden pool, whose depths surpass
In crystal clearness Dian's looking-glass;
And, gazing, saw that Rose, which from the prime
Derives its name, reflected, as the chime
Of echo doth reverberate some sweet sound:
The starry treasure from the blue profound
She longed to ravish;—shall she plunge, or climb
The humid precipice, and seize the guest
Of April, smiling high in upper air?
Desperate alternative! what fiend could dare
To prompt the thought?—Upon the steep rock's breast
The lonely Primrose yet renews its bloom,
Untouched memento of her hapless doom!

XXIII

SHEEP-WASHING

SAD thoughts, avaunt!—partake we their blithe cheer
Who gathered in betimes the unshorn flock
To wash the fleece, where haply bands of rock,
Checking the stream, make a pool smooth and clear
As this we look on. Distant Mountains hear,
Hear and repeat, the turmoil that unites
Clamour of boys with innocent despites
Of barking dogs, and bleatings from strange fear.
And what if Duddon's spotless flood receive
Unwelcome mixtures as the uncouth noise
Thickens, the pastoral River will forgive
Such wrong; nor need *we* blame the licensed joys,
Though false to Nature's quiet equipoise:
Frank are the sports, the stains are fugitive.

XXIV

THE RESTING-PLACE

MID-NOON is past;—upon the sultry mead
No zephyr breathes, no cloud its shadow throws:
If we advance unstrengthened by repose,
Farewell the solace of the vagrant reed!
This Nook—with woodbine hung and straggling weed
Tempting recess as ever pilgrim chose,
Half grot, half arbour—proffers to enclose
Body and mind, from molestation freed,
In narrow compass—narrow as itself:
Or if the Fancy, too industrious Elf,
Be loth that we should breathe awhile exempt
From new incitements friendly to our task,
Here wants not stealthy prospect, that may tempt
Loose Idless to forego her wily mask.

XXV

METHINKS 'twere no unprecedented feat
Should some benignant Minister of air
Lift, and encircle with a cloudy chair,

The One for whom my heart shall ever beat
With tenderest love;—or, if a safer seat
Atween his downy wings be furnished, there
Would lodge her, and the cherished burden bear
O'er hill and valley to this dim retreat!
Rough ways my steps have trod;—too rough and long
For her companionship; here dwells soft ease:
With sweets that she partakes not some distaste
Mingles, and lurking consciousness of wrong;
Languish the flowers; the waters seem to waste
Their vocal charm; their sparklings cease to please.

XXVI

RETURN, Content! for fondly I pursued,
Even when a child, the Streams—unheard, unseen;
Through tangled woods, impending rocks between;
Or, free as air, with flying inquest viewed
The sullen reservoirs whence their bold brood—
Pure as the morning, fretful, boisterous, keen,
Green as the salt-sea billows, white and green—
Poured down the hills, a choral multitude!
Nor have I tracked their course for scanty gains;
They taught me random cares and truant joys,
That shield from mischief and preserve from stains
Vague minds, while men are growing out of boys;
Maturer Fancy owes to their rough noise
Impetuous thoughts that brook not servile reins.

XXVII

FALLEN, and diffused into a shapeless heap,
Or quietly self-buried in earth's mould,
Is that embattled House, whose massy Keep,
Flung from yon cliff a shadow large and cold.
There dwelt the gay, the bountiful, the bold;
Till nightly lamentations, like the sweep
Of winds—though winds were silent—struck a deep
And lasting terror through that ancient Hold.
Its line of Warriors fled;—they shrunk when tried
By ghostly power:—but Time's unsparing hand
Hath plucked such foes, like weeds, from out the land;
And now, if men with men in peace abide,
All other strength the weakest may withstand,
All worse assaults may safely be defied.

XXVIII

JOURNEY RENEWED

I ROSE while yet the cattle, heat-opprest,
Crowded together under rustling trees
Brushed by the current of the water-breeze;
And for *their* sakes, and love of all that rest,
On Duddon's margin, in the sheltering nest;
For all the startled scaly tribes that slink
Into his coverts, and each fearless link
Of dancing insects forged upon his breast;
For these, and hopes and recollections worn
Close to the vital seat of human clay;
Glad meetings, tender partings, that upstay
The drooping mind of absence, by vows sworn
In his pure presence near the trysting thorn—
I thanked the Leader of my onward way.

XXIX

No record tells of lance opposed to lance,
Horse charging horse, 'mid these retired domains;
Tells that their turf drank purple from the veins
Of heroes, fallen, or struggling to advance,
Till doubtful combat issued in a trance

Of victory, that struck through heart and reins
Even to the inmost seat of mortal pains,
And lightened o'er the pallid countenance.
Yet, to the loyal and the brave, who lie
In the blank earth, neglected and forlorn,
The passing Winds memorial tribute pay;
The Torrents chant their praise, inspiring scorn
Of power usurped; with proclamation high,
And glad acknowledgment, of lawful sway.

XXX

Who swerves from innocence, who makes divorce
Of that serene companion—a good name,
Recovers not his loss; but walks with shame,
With doubt, with fear, and haply with remorse:
And oft-times he—who, yielding to the force
Of chance-temptation, ere his journey end,
From chosen comrade turns, or faithful friend—
In vain shall rue the broken intercourse.
Not so with such as loosely wear the chain
That binds them, pleasant River! to thy side:—
Through the rough copse wheel thou with hasty stride;
I choose to saunter o'er the grassy plain,
Sure, when the separation has been tried,
That we, who part in love, shall meet again.

XXXI

The Kirk of Ulpha to the pilgrim's eye
Is welcome as a star, that doth present
Its shining forehead through the peaceful rent
Of a black cloud diffused o'er half the sky:
Or as a fruitful palm-tree towering high
O'er the parched waste beside an Arab's tent;
Or the Indian tree whose branches, downward bent,
Take root again, a boundless canopy.
How sweet were leisure! could it yield no more
Than 'mid that wave-washed Churchyard to recline,
From pastoral graves extracting thoughts divine;
Or there to pace, and mark the summits hoar
Of distant moonlit mountains faintly shine,
Soothed by the unseen River's gentle roar.

XXXII

Not hurled precipitous from steep to steep;
Lingering no more 'mid flower-enamelled lands
And blooming thickets; nor by rocky bands
Held; but in radiant progress toward the Deep
Where mightiest rivers into powerless sleep
Sink, and forget their nature—*now* expands
Majestic Duddon, over smooth flat sands
Gliding in silence with unfettered sweep!
Beneath an ampler sky a region wide
Is opened round him:—hamlets, towers, and towns,
And blue-topped hills, behold him from afar;
In stately mien to sovereign Thames allied
Spreading his bosom under Kentish downs,
With commerce freighted, or triumphant war.

XXXIII

CONCLUSION

But here no cannon thunders to the gale;
Upon the wave no haughty pendants cast
A crimson splendour: lowly is the mast
That rises here, and humbly spread, the sail;
While, less disturbed than in the narrow Vale
Through which with strange vicissitudes he passed,
The Wanderer seeks that receptacle vast
Where all his unambitious functions fail
And may thy Poet, cloud-born Stream! be free—
The sweets of earth contentedly resigned,
And each tumultuous working left behind
At seemly distance—to advance like Thee;
Prepared, in peace of heart, in calm of mind
And soul, to mingle with Eternity!

XXXIV

AFTER-THOUGHT

I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away.—Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon, as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.[1]

A PARSONAGE IN OXFORDSHIRE

This Parsonage was the residence of my friend Jones, and is particularly described in another note.

Where holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,
Is marked by no distinguishable line;
The turf unites, the pathways intertwine;
And, wheresoe'er the stealing footstep tends,
Garden, and that domain where kindred, friends,
And neighbours rest together, here confound
Their several features, mingled like the sound
Of many waters, or as evening blends
With shady night. Soft airs, from shrub and flower,
Waft fragrant greetings to each silent grave;
And while those lofty poplars gently wave
Their tops, between them comes and goes a sky
Bright as the glimpses of eternity,
To saints accorded in their mortal hour.

1820.

TO ENTERPRISE

Keep for the Young the impassioned smile
Shed from thy countenance, as I see thee stand
High on that chalky cliff of Britain's Isle,
A slender volume grasping in thy hand—
(Perchance the pages that relate
The various turns of Crusoe's fate)—
Ah, spare the exulting smile,
And drop thy pointing finger bright
As the first flash of beacon light;
But neither veil thy head in shadows dim,
Nor turn thy face away
From One who, in the evening of his day,
To thee would offer no presumptuous hymn!

I

Bold Spirit! who art free to rove
Among the starry courts of Jove,
And oft in splendour dost appear
Embodied to poetic eyes,
While traversing this nether sphere,
Where Mortals call thee Enterprise.
Daughter of Hope! her favourite Child,
Whom she to young Ambition bore,
When hunter's arrow first defiled
The grove, and stained the turf with gore;
Thee wingèd Fancy took, and nursed
On broad Euphrates' palmy shore,
And where the mightier Waters burst
From caves of Indian mountains hoar!
She wrapped thee in a panther's skin;
And Thou, thy favourite food to win,
The flame-eyed eagle oft wouldst scare
From her rock-fortress in mid air,
With infant shout; and often sweep,
Paired with the ostrich, o'er the plain;
Or, tired with sport, wouldst sink asleep
Upon the couchant lion's mane!
With rolling years thy strength increased
And, far beyond thy native East,
To thee, by varying titles known
As variously thy power was shown,
Did incense-bearing altars rise,
Which caught the blaze of sacrifice,
From suppliants panting for the skies!

II

What though this ancient Earth be trod
No more by step of Demi-god

---

[1] See Note.

Mounting from glorious deed to deed
As thou from clime to clime didst lead;
Yet still, the bosom beating high,
And the hushed farewell of an eye
Where no procrastinating gaze
A last infirmity betrays,
Prove that thy heaven-descended sway
Shall ne'er submit to cold decay.
By thy divinity impelled,
The Stripling seeks the tented field;
The aspiring Virgin kneels; and, pale
With awe, receives the hallowed veil,
A soft and tender Heroine
Vowed to severer discipline;
Inflamed by thee, the blooming Boy
Makes of the whistling shrouds a toy,
And of the ocean's dismal breast
A play-ground,—or a couch of rest;
'Mid the blank world of snow and ice,
Thou to his dangers dost enchain
The Chamois-chaser awed in vain
By chasm or dizzy precipice;
And hast Thou not with triumph seen
How soaring Mortals glide between
Or through the clouds, and brave the light
With bolder than Icarian flight?
How they, in bells of crystal, dive—
Where winds and waters cease to strive—
For no unholy visitings,
Among the monsters of the Deep;
And all the sad and precious things
Which there in ghastly silence sleep?
Or, adverse tides and currents headed,
And breathless calms no longer dreaded,
In never-slackening voyage go
Straight as an arrow from the bow;
And, slighting sails and scorning oars,
Keep faith with Time on distant shores?
—Within our fearless reach are placed
The secrets of the burning Waste;
Egyptian tombs unlock their dead,
Nile trembles at his fountain head;
Thou speak'st—and lo! the polar Seas
Unbosom their last mysteries.
—But oh! what transports, what sublime reward,
Won from the world of mind, dost thou prepare
For philosophic Sage; or high-souled Bard
Who, for thy service trained in lonely woods,
Hath fed on pageants floating through the air,
Or calentured in depth of limpid floods;
Nor grieves—tho' doomed thro' silent night to bear
The domination of his glorious themes,
Or struggle in the net-work of thy dreams!

III

If there be movements in the Patriot's soul,
From source still deeper, and of higher worth,
'Tis thine the quickening impulse to control,
And in due season send the mandate forth;
Thy call a prostrate Nation can restore,
When but a single Mind resolves to crouch no more.

IV

Dread Minister of wrath!
Who to their destined punishment dost urge
The Pharaohs of the earth, the men of hardened heart!
Not unassisted by the flattering stars,
Thou strew'st temptation o'er the path
When they in pomp depart
With trampling horses and refulgent cars—
Soon to be swallowed by the briny surge;
Or cast, for lingering death, on unknown strands;
Or caught amid a whirl of desert sands—
An Army now, and now a living hill[1]
That a brief while heaves with convulsive throes—
Then all is still;
Or, to forget their madness and their woes,
Wrapt in a winding-sheet of spotless snows!

V

Back flows the willing current of my Song:
If to provoke such doom the Impious dare,
Why should it daunt a blameless prayer?
—Bold Goddess! range our Youth among;
Nor let thy genuine impulse fail to beat
In hearts no longer young;
Still may a veteran Few have pride
In thoughts whose sternness makes them sweet;
In fixed resolves by Reason justified;
That to their object cleave like sleet
Whitening a pine tree's northern side,
When fields are naked far and wide,
And withered leaves, from earth's cold breast
Up-caught in whirlwinds, nowhere can find rest.

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[1] See Note.

VI

But, if such homage thou disdain
As doth with mellowing years agree,
One rarely absent from thy train
More humble favours may obtain
For thy contented Votary.
She, who incites the frolic lambs
In presence of their heedless dams,
And to the solitary fawn
Vouchsafes her lessons, bounteous Nymph
That wakes the breeze, the sparkling lymph
Doth hurry to the lawn;
She, who inspires that strain of joyance holy
Which the sweet Bird, misnamed the melancholy,
Pours forth in shady groves, shall plead for me;
And vernal mornings opening bright
With views of undefined delight,
And cheerful songs, and suns that shine
On busy days, with thankful nights, be mine.

VII

But thou, O Goddess! in thy favourite Isle
(Freedom's impregnable redoubt,
The wide earth's store-house fenced about
With breakers roaring to the gales
That stretch a thousand thousand sails)
Quicken the slothful, and exalt the vile!—
Thy impulse is the life of Fame;
Glad Hope would almost cease to be
If torn from thy society;
And Love, when worthiest of his name,
Is proud to walk the earth with Thee!

1820.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS[1]

IN SERIES

1821–22.

My purpose in writing this Series was, as much as possible, to confine my view to the introduction, progress, and operation of the Church in England, both previous and subsequent to the Reformation. The Sonnets were written long before ecclesiastical history and points of doctrine had excited the interest with which they have been recently enquired into and discussed. The former particular is mentioned as an excuse for my having fallen into error in respect to an incident which had been selected as setting forth the height to which the power of the Popedom over temporal sovereignty had attained, and the arrogance with which it was displayed. I allude to the last Sonnet but one in the first series, where Pope Alexander the third at Venice is described as setting his foot on the neck of the Emperor Barbarossa. Though this is related as a fact in history, I am told it is a mere legend of no authority. Substitute for it an undeniable truth not less fitted for my purpose, namely, the penance inflicted by Gregory the Seventh upon the Emperor Henry the Fourth.

Before I conclude my notice of these Sonnets, let me observe that the opinion I pronounced in favour of Laud (long before the Oxford Tract movement) and which had brought censure upon me from several quarters, is not in the least changed. Omitting here to examine into his conduct in respect to the persecuting spirit with which he has been charged, I am persuaded that most of his aims to restore ritual practices which had been abandoned were good and wise, whatever errors he might commit in the manner he sometimes attempted to enforce them. I further believe that, had not he, and others who shared his opinions and felt as he did, stood up in opposition to the reformers of that period, it is questionable whether the Church would ever have recovered its lost ground and become the blessing it now is, and will, I trust, become in a still greater degree, both to those of its communion and to those who unfortunately are separated from it.

PART I

FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO BRITAIN, TO THE CONSUMMATION OF THE PAPAL DOMINION

"A verse may catch a wandering Soul, that flies
Profounder Tracts, and by a blest surprise
Convert delight into a Sacrifice."

I

INTRODUCTION

I, WHO accompanied with faithful pace
Cerulean Duddon from his cloud-fed spring,
And loved with spirit ruled by his to sing
Of mountain quiet and boon nature's grace;
I, who essayed the nobler Stream to trace
Of Liberty, and smote the plausive string
Till the checked torrent, proudly triumphing,
Won for herself a lasting resting-place;
Now seek upon the heights of Time the source
Of a HOLY RIVER, on whose banks are found

---

[1] See Note.

Sweet pastoral flowers, and laurels that have crowned
Full oft the unworthy brow of lawless force;
And, for delight of him who tracks its course,
Immortal amaranth and palms abound.

II

CONJECTURES

If there be prophets on whose spirits rest
Past things, revealed like future, they can tell
What Powers, presiding o'er the sacred well
Of Christian Faith, this savage Island blessed
With its first bounty. Wandering through the west,
Did holy Paul[1] a while in Britain dwell,
And call the Fountain forth by miracle,
And with dread signs the nascent Stream invest?
Or He, whose bonds dropped off, whose prison doors
Flew open, by an Angel's voice unbarred?
Or some of humbler name, to these wild shores
Storm-driven; who, having seen the cup of woe
Pass from their Master, sojourned here to guard
The precious Current they had taught to flow?

III

TREPIDATION OF THE DRUIDS

Screams round the Arch-druid's brow the seamew[2]—white
As Menai's foam; and toward the mystic ring
Where Augurs stand, the Future questioning,
Slowly the cormorant aims her heavy flight,
Portending ruin to each baleful rite,
That, in the lapse of ages, hath crept o'er
Diluvian truths, and patriarchal lore.
Haughty the Bard: can these meek doctrines blight
His transports? wither his heroic strains?
But all shall be fulfilled;—the Julian spear
A way first opened; and, with Roman chains,
The tidings come of Jesus crucified;
They come—they spread—the weak, the suffering, hear;
Receive the faith, and in the hope abide.

IV

DRUIDICAL EXCOMMUNICATION

Mercy and Love have met thee on thy road,
Thou wretched Outcast, from the gift of fire
And food cut off by sacerdotal ire,
From every sympathy that Man bestowed!
Yet shall it claim our reverence, that to God,
Ancient of days! that to the eternal Sire,
These jealous Ministers of law aspire,
As to the one sole fount whence wisdom flowed,
Justice, and order. Tremblingly escaped,
As if with prescience of the coming storm,
That intimation when the stars were shaped;
And still, 'mid yon thick woods, the primal truth
Glimmers through many a superstitious form
That fills the Soul with unavailing ruth.

V

UNCERTAINTY

Darkness surrounds us; seeking, we are lost
On Snowdon's wilds, amid Brigantian coves,
Or where the solitary shepherd roves
Along the plain of Sarum, by the ghost
Of Time and shadows of Tradition, crost;
And where the boatman of the Western Isles
Slackens his course—to mark those holy piles

---

[1] See Note.

[2] This water-fowl was, among the Druids, an emblem of those traditions connected with the Deluge that made an important part of their mysteries. The Cormorant was a bird of bad omen.

Which yet survive on bleak Iona's coast.
Nor these, nor monuments of eldest name,
Nor Taliesin's unforgotten lays,
Nor characters of Greek or Roman fame,
To an unquestionable Source have led;
Enough—if eyes, that sought the fountain-head
In vain, upon the growing Rill may gaze.

VI

PERSECUTION

LAMENT! for Diocletian's fiery sword
Works busy as the lightning; but instinct
With malice ne'er to deadliest weapon linked
Which God's ethereal store-houses afford:
Against the Followers of the incarnate Lord
It rages; some are smitten in the field—
Some pierced to the heart through the ineffectual shield
Of sacred home;—with pomp are others gored
And dreadful respite. Thus was Alban tried,
England's first Martyr, whom no threats could shake;
Self-offered victim, for his friend he died,
And for the faith; nor shall his name forsake
That Hill, whose flowery platform seems to rise
By Nature decked for holiest sacrifice.[1]

VII

RECOVERY

As, when a storm hath ceased, the birds regain
Their cheerfulness, and busily retrim
Their nests, or chant a gratulating hymn
To the blue ether and bespangled plain;
Even so, in many a re-constructed fane,
Have the survivors of this Storm renewed
Their holy rites with vocal gratitude:
And solemn ceremonials they ordain
To celebrate their great deliverance;
Most feelingly instructed 'mid their fear—
That persecution, blind with rage extreme,
May not the less, through Heaven's mild countenance,
Even in her own despite, both feed and cheer;
For all things are less dreadful than they seem.

VIII

TEMPTATIONS FROM ROMAN REFINEMENTS

WATCH, and be firm! for, soul-subduing vice,
Heart-killing luxury, on your steps await.
Fair houses, baths, and banquets delicate,
And temples flashing, bright as polar ice,
Their radiance through the woods—may yet suffice
To sap your hardy virtue, and abate
Your love of Him upon whose forehead sate
The crown of thorns; whose life-blood flowed, the price
Of your redemption. Shun the insidious arts
That Rome provides, less dreading from her frown
Than from her wily praise, her peaceful gown,
Language, and letters;—these, though fondly viewed
As humanising graces, are but parts
And instruments of deadliest servitude!

IX

DISSENSIONS

THAT heresies should strike (if truth be scanned
Presumptuously) their roots both wide and deep,
Is natural as dreams to feverish sleep.
Lo! Discord at the altar dares to stand
Uplifting toward high Heaven her fiery brand,
A cherished Priestess of the new-baptized!
But chastisement shall follow peace despised.
The Pictish cloud darkens the enervate land
By Rome abandoned; vain are suppliant cries,
And prayers that would undo her forced farewell;

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[1] See Note.

For she returns not.—Awed by her own knell,
She casts the Britons upon strange Allies
Soon to become more dreaded enemies
Than heartless misery called them to repel.

X

STRUGGLE OF THE BRITONS AGAINST THE BARBARIANS

RISE!—they *have* risen: of brave Aneurin ask
How they have scourged old foes, perfidious friends:
The Spirit of Caractacus descends
Upon the Patriots, animates their task;—
Amazement runs before the towering casque
Of Arthur, bearing through the stormy field
The virgin sculptured on his Christian shield:—
Stretched in the sunny light of victory bask
The Host that followed Urien as he strode
O'er heaps of slain;—from Cambrian wood and moss
Druids descend, auxiliars of the Cross;
Bards, nursed on blue Plinlimmon's still abode,
Rush on the fight, to harps preferring swords,
And everlasting deeds to burning words!

XI

SAXON CONQUEST

NOR wants the cause the panic-striking aid
Of hallelujahs[1] tost from hill to hill—
For instant victory. But Heaven's high will
Permits a second and a darker shade
Of Pagan night. Afflicted and dismayed,
The Relics of the sword flee to the mountains:
O wretched Land! whose tears have flowed like fountains;
Whose arts and honours in the dust are laid
By men yet scarcely conscious of a care
For other monuments than those of Earth;[1]
Who, as the fields and woods have given them birth,
Will build their savage fortunes only there;
Content, if foss, and barrow, and the girth
Of long-drawn rampart, witness what they were.

XII

MONASTERY OF OLD BANGOR[2]

THE oppression of the tumult—wrath and scorn—
The tribulation—and the gleaming blades—
Such is the impetuous spirit that pervades
The song of Taliesin;—Ours shall mourn
The *unarmed* Host who by their prayers would turn
The sword from Bangor's walls, and guard the store
Of Aboriginal and Roman lore,
And Christian monuments, that now must burn
To senseless ashes. Mark! how all things swerve
From their known course, or vanish like a dream;
Another language spreads from coast to coast;
Only perchance some melancholy Stream
And some indignant Hills old names preserve,
When laws, and creeds, and people all are lost!

XIII

CASUAL INCITEMENT

A BRIGHT-HAIRED company of youthful slaves,
Beautiful strangers, stand within the pale
Of a sad market, ranged for public sale,
Where Tiber's stream the immortal City laves:
ANGLI by name; and not an ANGEL waves
His wing who could seem lovelier to man's eye
Than they appear to holy Gregory;
Who, having learnt that name, salvation craves
For Them, and for their Land. The earnest Sire,
His questions urging, feels, in slender ties
Of chiming sound, commanding sympathies;

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[1] See Note.

[2] See Note.

DE-IRIANS—he would save them from God's IRE;
Subjects of Saxon ÆLLA—they shall sing
Glad HALLE-lujahs to the eternal King!

XIV

GLAD TIDINGS

FOR ever hallowed be this morning fair,
Blest be the unconscious shore on which ye tread,
And blest the silver Cross, which ye, instead
Of martial banner, in procession bear;
The Cross preceding Him who floats in air,
The pictured Saviour!—By Augustin led,
They come—and onward travel without dread,
Chanting in barbarous ears a tuneful prayer—
Sung for themselves, and those whom they would free!
Rich conquest waits them:—the tempestuous sea
Of Ignorance, that ran so rough and high
And heeded not the voice of clashing swords,
These good men humble by a few bare words,
And calm with fear of God's divinity.

XV

PAULINUS[1]

BUT, to remote Northumbria's royal Hall,
Where thoughtful Edwin, tutored in the school
Of sorrow, still maintains a heathen rule,
Who comes with functions apostolical?
Mark him, of shoulders curved, and stature tall,
Black hair, and vivid eye, and meagre cheek,
His prominent feature like an eagle's beak;
A Man whose aspect doth at once appal
And strike with reverence. The Monarch leans
Toward the pure truths this Delegate propounds
Repeatedly his own deep mind he sounds
With careful hesitation,—then convenes
A synod of his Councillors:—give ear,
And what a pensive Sage doth utter, hear!

[1] See Note.

XVI

PERSUASION

"MAN'S life is like a Sparrow, mighty King!
"That—while at banquet with your Chiefs you sit
"Housed near a blazing fire—is seen to flit
"Safe from the wintry tempest. Fluttering,
"Here did it enter; there, on hasty wing,
"Flies out, and passes on from cold to cold;
"But whence it came we know not, nor behold
"Whither it goes. Even such, that transient Thing,
"The human Soul; not utterly unknown
"While in the Body lodged, her warm abode;
"But from what world She came, what woe or weal
"On her departure waits, no tongue hath shown;
"This mystery if the Stranger can reveal,
"His be a welcome cordially bestowed!"[2]

XVII

CONVERSION

PROMPT transformation works the novel Lore;
The Council closed, the Priest in full career
Rides forth, an armèd man, and hurls a spear
To desecrate the Fane which heretofore
He served in folly. Woden falls, and Thor
Is overturned; the mace, in battle heaved
(So might they dream) till victory was achieved,
Drops, and the God himself is seen no more.
Temple and Altar sink, to hide their shame
Amid oblivious weeds. "*O come to me,*
Ye heavy laden!" such the inviting voice
Heard near fresh streams;[2] and thousands, who rejoice
In the new Rite, the pledge of sanctity,
Shall, by regenerate life, the promise claim.

[2] See Note.

XVIII

APOLOGY

NOR scorn the aid which Fancy oft doth lend
The Soul's eternal interests to promote:
Death, darkness, danger, are our natural lot;
And evil Spirits *may* our walk attend
For aught the wisest know or comprehend;
Then be *good* Spirits free to breathe a note
Of elevation; let their odours float
Around these Converts; and their glories blend,
The midnight stars outshining, or the blaze
Of the noon-day. Nor doubt that golden cords
Of good works, mingling with the visions, raise
The Soul to purer worlds: and *who* the line
Shall draw, the limits of the power define,
That even imperfect faith to man affords?

XIX

PRIMITIVE SAXON CLERGY[1]

HOW beautiful your presence, how benign,
Servants of God! who not a thought will share
With the vain world; who, outwardly as bare
As winter trees, yield no fallacious sign
That the firm soul is clothed with fruit divine!
Such Priest, when service worthy of his care
Has called him forth to breathe the common air,
Might seem a saintly Image from its shrine
Descended:—happy are the eyes that meet
The Apparition; evil thoughts are stayed
At his approach, and low-bowed necks entreat
A benediction from his voice or hand;
Whence grace, through which the heart can understand,
And vows, that bind the will, in silence made.

XX

OTHER INFLUENCES

AH, when the Body, round which in love we clung,
Is chilled by death, does mutual service fail?
Is tender pity then of no avail?
Are intercessions of the fervent tongue
A waste of hope?—From this sad source have sprung
Rites that console the Spirit, under grief
Which ill can brook more rational relief:
Hence, prayers are shaped amiss, and dirges sung
For Souls whose doom is fixed! The way is smooth
For Power that travels with the human heart:
Confession ministers the pang to soothe
In him who at the ghost of guilt doth start.
Ye holy Men, so earnest in your care,
Of your own mighty instruments beware!

XXI

SECLUSION

LANCE, shield, and sword relinquished, at his side
A bead-roll, in his hand a claspèd book,
Or staff more harmless than a shepherd's crook,
The war-worn Chieftain quits the world—to hide
His thin autumnal locks where Monks abide
In cloistered privacy. But not to dwell
In soft repose he comes: within his cell,
Round the decaying trunk of human pride,
At morn, and eve, and midnight's silent hour,
Do penitential cogitations cling;
Like ivy, round some ancient elm, they twine
In grisly folds and strictures serpentine;
Yet, while they strangle, a fair growth they bring,
For recompence—their own perennial bower.

XXII

CONTINUED

METHINKS that to some vacant hermitage
My feet would rather turn—to some dry nook

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[1] See Note.

Scooped out of living rock, and near a brook
Hurled down a mountain-cove from stage to stage,
Yet tempering, for my sight, its bustling rage
In the soft heaven of a translucent pool;
Thence creeping under sylvan arches cool,
Fit haunt of shapes whose glorious equipage
Would elevate my dreams. A beechen bowl,
A maple dish, my furniture should be;
Crisp, yellow leaves my bed; the hooting owl
My night-watch: nor should e'er the crested fowl
From thorp or vill his matins sound for me,
Tired of the world and all its industry.

XXIII

REPROOF

But what if One, through grove or flowery mead,
Indulging thus at will the creeping feet
Of a voluptuous indolence, should meet
Thy hovering Shade, O venerable Bede!
The saint, the scholar, from a circle freed
Of toil stupendous, in a hallowed seat
Of learning, where thou heard'st the billows beat
On a wild coast, rough monitors to feed
Perpetual industry. Sublime Recluse!
The recreant soul, that dares to shun the debt
Imposed on human kind, must first forget
Thy diligence, thy unrelaxing use
Of a long life; and, in the hour of death,
The last dear service of thy passing breath![1]

XXIV

SAXON MONASTERIES, AND LIGHTS AND SHADES OF THE RELIGION

By such examples moved to unbought pains,
The people work like congregated bees;[2]
Eager to build the quiet Fortresses
Where Piety, as they believe, obtains
From Heaven a *general* blessing; timely rains
Or needful sunshine; prosperous enterprise,
Justice and peace:—bold faith! yet also rise
The sacred Structures for less doubtful gains.
The Sensual think with reverence of the palms
Which the chaste Votaries seek, beyond the grave
If penance be redeemable, thence alms
Flow to the poor, and freedom to the slave;
And if full oft the Sanctuary save
Lives black with guilt, ferocity it calms.

XXV

MISSIONS AND TRAVELS

Not sedentary all: there are who roam
To scatter seeds of life on barbarous shores;
Or quit with zealous step their knee-worn floors
To seek the general mart of Christendom;
Whence they, like richly-laden merchants, come
To their belovèd cells:—or shall we say
That, like the Red-cross Knight, they urge their way,
To lead in memorable triumph home
Truth, their immortal Una? Babylon,
Learnèd and wise, hath perished utterly,
Nor leaves her Speech one word to aid the sigh
That would lament her;—Memphis, Tyre, are gone
With all their Arts,—but classic lore glides on
By these Religious saved for all posterity.

XXVI

ALFRED

Behold a pupil of the monkish gown,
The pious Alfred, King to Justice dear!
Lord of the harp and liberating spear;
Mirror of Princes! Indigent Renown
Might range the starry ether for a crown
Equal to *his* deserts, who, like the year,
Pours forth his bounty, like the day doth cheer,
And awes like night with mercy-tempered frown.
Ease from this noble miser of his time
No moment steals; pain narrows not his cares.[3]

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[1] He expired dictating the last words of a translation of St. John's Gospel.

[2] See Note.

[3] See Note.

Though small his kingdom as a spark or gem,
Of Alfred boasts remote Jerusalem,
And Christian India, through her wide-spread clime,
In sacred converse gifts with Alfred shares.

XXVII

HIS DESCENDANTS

WHEN thy great soul was freed from mortal chains,
Darling of England! many a bitter shower
Fell on thy tomb; but emulative power
Flowed in thy line through undegenerate veins.
The Race of Alfred covet glorious pains
When dangers threaten, dangers ever new!
Black tempests bursting, blacker still in view!
But manly sovereignty its hold retains;
The root sincere, the branches bold to strive
With the fierce tempest, while, within the round
Of their protection, gentle virtues thrive;
As oft, 'mid some green plot of open ground,
Wide as the oak extends its dewy gloom,
The fostered hyacinths spread their purple bloom.

XXVIII

INFLUENCE ABUSED

URGED by Ambition, who with subtlest skill
Changes her means, the Enthusiast as a dupe
Shall soar, and as a hypocrite can stoop,
And turn the instruments of good to ill,
Moulding the credulous people to his will.
Such DUNSTAN:—from its Benedictine coop
Issues the master Mind, at whose fell swoop
The chaste affections tremble to fulfil
Their purposes. Behold, pre-signified,
The Might of spiritual sway! his thoughts, his dreams,
Do in the supernatural world abide:
So vaunt a throng of Followers, filled with pride
In what they see of virtues pushed to extremes,
And sorceries of talent misapplied.

XXIX

DANISH CONQUESTS

WOE to the Crown that doth the Cowl obey![1]
Dissension, checking arms that would restrain
The incessant Rovers of the northern main,
Helps to restore and spread a Pagan sway:
But Gospel-truth is potent to allay
Fierceness and rage; and soon the cruel Dane
Feels, through the influence of her gentle reign,
His native superstitions melt away.
Thus, often, when thick gloom the east o'ershrouds,
The full-orbed Moon, slow-climbing, doth appear
Silently to consume the heavy clouds;
How no one can resolve; but every eye
Around her sees, while air is hushed, a clear
And widening circuit of ethereal sky.

XXX

CANUTE

A PLEASANT music floats along the Mere,
From Monks in Ely chanting service high,
While-as Canùte the King is rowing by:
"My Oarsmen," quoth the mighty King, "draw near,
"That we the sweet song of the Monks may hear!"
He listens (all past conquests, and all schemes
Of future, vanishing like empty dreams)
Heart-touched, and haply not without a tear.
The Royal Minstrel, ere the choir is still,
While his free Barge skims the smooth flood along,
Gives to that rapture an accordant Rhyme.[2]
O suffering Earth! be thankful: sternest clime
And rudest age are subject to the thrill
Of heaven-descended Piety and Song.

[1] See Note.

[2] Which is still extant.

XXXI

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

THE woman-hearted Confessor prepares
The evanescence of the Saxon line.
Hark! 'tis the tolling Curfew!—the stars shine;
But of the lights that cherish household cares
And festive gladness, burns not one that dares
To twinkle after that dull stroke of thine,
Emblem and instrument, from Thames to Tyne,
Of force that daunts, and cunning that ensnares!
Yet as the terrors of the lordly bell,
That quench, from hut to palace, lamps and fires,
Touch not the tapers of the sacred quires;
Even so a thraldom, studious to expel
Old laws, and ancient customs to derange,
To Creed or Ritual brings no fatal change.

XXXII

COLDLY we spake. The Saxons, overpowered
By wrong triumphant through its own excess,
From fields laid waste, from house and home devoured
By flames, look up to heaven and crave redress
From God's eternal justice. Pitiless
Though men be, there are angels that can feel
For wounds that death alone has power to heal,
For penitent guilt, and innocent distress.
And has a Champion risen in arms to try
His Country's virtue, fought, and breathes no more;
Him in their hearts the people canonize;
And far above the mine's most precious ore
The least small pittance of bare mould they prize
Scooped from the sacred earth where his dear relics lie.

XXXIII

THE COUNCIL OF CLERMONT

"AND shall," the Pontiff asks, "profaneness flow
"From Nazareth—source of Christian piety,
"From Bethlehem, from the Mounts of Agony
"And glorified Ascension? Warriors, go,
"With prayers and blessings we your path will sow;
"Like Moses hold our hands erect, till ye
"Have chased far off by righteous victory
"These sons of Amalek, or laid them low!"—
"GOD WILLETH IT," the whole assembly cry;
Shout which the enraptured multitude astounds!
The Council-roof and Clermont's towers reply;—
"God willeth it," from hill to hill rebounds,
And, in awe-stricken Countries far and nigh,
Through "Nature's hollow arch" that voice resounds.[1]

XXXIV

CRUSADES

THE turbaned Race are poured in thickening swarms
Along the west; though driven from Aquitaine,
The Crescent glitters on the towers of Spain;
And soft Italia feels renewed alarms;
The scimitar, that yields not to the charms
Of ease, the narrow Bosphorus will disdain;
Nor long (that crossed) would Grecian hills detain
Their tents, and check the current of their arms.
Then blame not those who, by the mightiest lever
Known to the moral world, Imagination,
Upheave, so seems it, from her natural station
All Christendom:—they sweep along (was never
So huge a host!)—to tear from the Unbeliever
The precious Tomb, their haven of salvation.

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[1] The decision of this council was believed to be instantly known in remote parts of Europe.

XXXV

RICHARD I

REDOUBTED King, of courage leonine,
I mark thee, Richard! urgent to equip
Thy warlike person with the staff and scrip;
I watch thee sailing o'er the midland brine;
In conquered Cyprus see thy Bride decline
Her blushing cheek, love-vows upon her lip,
And see love-emblems streaming from thy ship,
As thence she holds her way to Palestine.
My Song, a fearless homager, would attend
Thy thundering battle-axe as it cleaves the press
Of war, but duty summons her away
To tell—how, finding in the rash distress
Of those Enthusiasts a subservient friend,
To giddier heights hath clomb the Papal sway.

XXXVI

AN INTERDICT

REALMS quake by turns: proud Arbitress of grace,
The Church, by mandate shadowing forth the power
She arrogates o'er heaven's eternal door,
Closes the gates of every sacred place.
Straight from the sun and tainted air's embrace
All sacred things are covered: cheerful morn
Grows sad as night—no seemly garb is worn,
Nor is a face allowed to meet a face
With natural smiles of greeting. Bells are dumb;
Ditches are graves—funereal rites denied;
And in the churchyard he must take his bride
Who dares be wedded! Fancies thickly come
Into the pensive heart ill fortified,
And comfortless despairs the soul benumb.

XXXVII

PAPAL ABUSES

As with the Stream our voyage we pursue,
The gross materials of this world present
A marvellous study of wild accident;
Uncouth proximities of old and new;
And bold transfigurations, more untrue
(As might be deemed) to disciplined intent
Than aught the sky's fantastic element,
When most fantastic, offers to the view.
Saw we not Henry scourged at Becket's shrine?
Lo! John self-stripped of his insignia:—crown,
Sceptre and mantle, sword and ring, laid down
At a proud Legate's feet! The spears that line
Baronial halls, the opprobrious insult feel;
And angry Ocean roars a vain appeal.

XXXVIII

SCENE IN VENICE

BLACK Demons hovering o'er his mitred head,
To Cæsar's Successor the Pontiff spake;
"Ere I absolve thee, stoop! that on thy neck
"Levelled with earth this foot of mine may tread."
Then he, who to the altar had been led,
He, whose strong arm the Orient could not check,
He, who had held the Soldan at his beck,
Stooped, of all glory disinherited,
And even the common dignity of man!—
Amazement strikes the crowd: while many turn
Their eyes away in sorrow, others burn
With scorn, invoking a vindictive ban
From outraged Nature; but the sense of most
In abject sympathy with power is lost.

XXXIX

PAPAL DOMINION

UNLESS to Peter's Chair the viewless wind
Must come and ask permission when to blow,
What further empire would it have? for now
A ghostly Domination, unconfined
As that by dreaming Bards to Love assigned

Sits there in sober truth—to raise the low,
Perplex the wise, the strong to overthrow;
Through earth and heaven to bind and to unbind!—
Resist—the thunder quails thee!—crouch—rebuff
Shall be thy recompence! from land to land
The ancient thrones of Christendom are stuff
For occupation of a magic wand,
And 'tis the Pope that wields it:—whether rough
Or smooth his front, our world is in his hand!

PART II

TO THE CLOSE OF THE TROUBLES IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES I

I

How soon—alas! did Man, created pure—
By Angels guarded, deviate from the line
Prescribed to duty:—woeful forfeiture
He made by wilful breach of law divine.
With like perverseness did the Church abjure
Obedience to her Lord, and haste to twine,
'Mid Heaven-born flowers that shall for aye endure,
Weeds on whose front the world had fixed her sign.
O Man,—if with thy trials thus it fares,
If good can smooth the way to evil choice,
From all rash censure be the mind kept free;
He only judges right who weighs, compares,
And in the sternest sentence which his voice
Pronounces, ne'er abandons Charity.

II

From false assumption rose, and, fondly hailed
By superstition, spread the Papal power;
Yet do not deem the Autocracy prevailed
Thus only, even in error's darkest hour.
She daunts, forth-thundering from her spiritual tower,
Brute rapine, or with gentle lure she tames.
Justice and Peace through Her uphold their claims;
And Chastity finds many a sheltering bower.
Realm there is none that if controlled or swayed
By her commands partakes not, in degree,
Of good, o'er manners arts and arms, diffused:
Yes, to thy domination, Roman See,
Tho' miserably, oft monstrously, abused
By blind ambition, be this tribute paid.

III

CISTERTIAN MONASTERY

"*Here Man more purely lives, less oft doth fall,*
"*More promptly rises, walks with stricter heed,*
"*More safely rests, dies happier, is freed*
"*Earlier from cleansing fires, and gains withal*
"*A brighter crown.*"[1]—On yon Cistertian wall
That confident assurance may be read;
And, to like shelter, from the world have fled
Increasing multitudes. The potent call
Doubtless shall cheat full oft the heart's desires;
Yet, while the rugged Age on pliant knee
Vows to rapt Fancy humble fealty,
A gentler life spreads round the holy spires;
Where'er they rise, the sylvan waste retires,
And aëry harvests crown the fertile lea.

IV

Deplorable his lot who tills the ground,
His whole life long tills it, with heartless toil
Of villain-service, passing with the soil
To each new Master, like a steer or hound,
Or like a rooted tree, or stone earth-bound;
But mark how gladly, through their own domains,
The Monks relax or break these iron chains;
While Mercy, uttering, through their voice, a sound
Echoed in Heaven, cries out, "Ye Chiefs, abate
These legalized oppressions! Man—whose name
And nature God disdained not; Man—whose soul

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[1] See Note.

Christ died for—cannot forfeit his high claim
To live and move exempt from all control
Which fellow-feeling doth not mitigate!"

V

MONKS AND SCHOOLMEN

RECORD we too, with just and faithful pen,
That many hooded Cenobites there are,
Who in their private cells have yet a care
Of public quiet; unambitious Men,
Counsellors for the world, of piercing ken;
Whose fervent exhortations from afar
Move Princes to their duty, peace or war;
And oft-times in the most forbidding den
Of solitude, with love of science strong,
How patiently the yoke of thought they bear
How subtly glide its finest threads along!
Spirits that crowd the intellectual sphere
With mazy boundaries, as the astronomer
With orb and cycle girds the starry throng.

VI

OTHER BENEFITS

AND, not in vain embodied to the sight,
Religion finds even in the stern retreat
Of feudal sway her own appropriate seat;
From the collegiate pomps on Windsor's height
Down to the humbler altar, which the Knight
And his retainers of the embattled hall
Seek in domestic oratory small,
For prayer in stillness, or the chanted rite;
Then chiefly dear, when foes are planted round,
Who teach the intrepid guardians of the place—
Hourly exposed to death, with famine worn,
And suffering under many a perilous wound—
How sad would be their durance, if forlorn
Of offices dispensing heavenly grace!

VII

CONTINUED

AND what melodious sounds at times prevail!
And, ever and anon, how bright a gleam
Pours on the surface of the turbid Stream!
What heartfelt fragrance mingles with the gale
That swells the bosom of our passing sail!
For where, but on *this* River's margin, blow
Those flowers of chivalry, to bind the brow
Of hardihood with wreaths that shall not fail?—
Fair Court of Edward! wonder of the world!
I see a matchless blazonry unfurled
Of wisdom, magnanimity, and love;
And meekness tempering honourable pride;
The lamb is couching by the lion's side,
And near the flame-eyed eagle sits the dove.

VIII

CRUSADERS

FURL we the sails, and pass with tardy oars
Through these bright regions, casting many a glance
Upon the dream-like issues—the romance
Of many-coloured life that Fortune pours
Round the Crusaders, till on distant shores
Their labours end; or they return to lie,
The vow performed, in cross-legged effigy,
Devoutly stretched upon their chancel floors.
Am I deceived? Or is their requiem chanted
By voices never mute when Heaven unties
Her inmost, softest, tenderest harmonies;
Requiem which Earth takes up with voice undaunted,
When she would tell how Brave, and Good, and Wise,
For their high guerdon not in vain have panted!

IX

As faith thus sanctified the warrior's crest
While from the Papal Unity there came,
What feebler means had failed to give, one aim
Diffused thro' all the regions of the West;
So does her Unity its power attest
By works of Art, that shed, on the outward frame
Of worship, glory and grace, which who shall blame
That ever looked to heaven for final rest?

Hail countless Temples! that so well befit
Your ministry; that, as ye rise and take
Form spirit and character from holy writ,
Give to devotion, wheresoe'er awake,
Pinions of high and higher sweep, and make
The unconverted soul with awe submit.

X

WHERE long and deeply hath been fixed the root
In the blest soil of gospel truth, the Tree,
(Blighted or scathed tho' many branches be,
Put forth to wither, many a hopeful shoot)
Can never cease to bear celestial fruit.
Witness the Church that oft-times, with effect
Dear to the saints, strives earnestly to eject
Her bane, her vital energies recruit.
Lamenting, do not hopelessly repine,
When such good work is doomed to be undone,
The conquests lost that were so hardly won:—
All promises vouchsafed by Heaven will shine
In light confirmed while years their course shall run,
Confirmed alike in progress and decline.

XI

TRANSUBSTANTIATION

ENOUGH! for see, with dim association
The tapers burn; the odorous incense feeds
A greedy flame; the pompous mass proceeds;
The Priest bestows the appointed consecration;
And, while the HOST is raised, its elevation
An awe and supernatural horror breeds;
And all the people bow their heads, like reeds
To a soft breeze, in lowly adoration.
This Valdo brooks not. On the banks of Rhone
He taught, till persecution chased him thence,
To adore the Invisible, and Him alone.
Nor are his Followers loth to seek defence,
'Mid woods and wilds, on Nature's craggy throne,
From rites that trample upon soul and sense.

XII

THE VAUDOIS

BUT whence came they who for the Saviour Lord
Have long borne witness as the Scriptures teach?—
Ages ere Valdo raised his voice to preach
In Gallic ears the unadulterate Word,
Their fugitive Progenitors explored
Subalpine vales, in quest of safe retreats
Where that pure Church survives, though summer heats
Open a passage to the Romish sword,
Far as it dares to follow. Herbs self-sown,
And fruitage gathered from the chestnut wood,
Nourish the sufferers then; and mists, that brood
O'er chasms with new-fallen obstacles bestrown,
Protect them; and the eternal snow that daunts
Aliens, is God's good winter for their haunts.

XIII

PRAISED be the Rivers, from their mountain springs
Shouting to Freedom, "Plant thy banners here!"
To harassed Piety, "Dismiss thy fear,
And in our caverns smooth thy ruffled wings!"
Nor be unthanked their final lingerings—
Silent, but not to high-souled Passion's ear—
'Mid reedy fens wide-spread and marshes drear,
Their own creation. Such glad welcomings
As Po was heard to give where Venice rose
Hailed from aloft those Heirs of truth divine
Who near his fountains sought obscure repose,
Yet came prepared as glorious lights to shine,
Should that be needed for their sacred Charge;
Blest Prisoners They, whose spirits were at large!

XIV

WALDENSES

Those had given earliest notice, as the lark
Springs from the ground the morn to gratulate;
Or rather rose the day to antedate,
By striking out a solitary spark,
When all the world with midnight gloom was dark.—
Then followed the Waldensian bands, whom Hate
In vain endeavours to exterminate,
Whom Obloquy pursues with hideous bark:[1]
But they desist not;—and the sacred fire,
Rekindled thus, from dens and savage woods
Moves, handed on with never-ceasing care,
Through courts, through camps, o'er limitary floods;
Nor lacks this sea-girt Isle a timely share
Of the new Flame, not suffered to expire.

XV

ARCHBISHOP CHICHELY TO HENRY V

"What beast in wilderness or cultured field
"The lively beauty of the leopard shows?
"What flower in meadow-ground or garden grows
"That to the towering lily doth not yield?
"Let both meet only on thy royal shield!
"Go forth, great King! claim what thy birth bestows;
"Conquer the Gallic lily which thy foes
"Dare to usurp;—thou hast a sword to wield,
"And Heaven will crown the right."—The mitred Sire
Thus spake—and lo! a Fleet, for Gaul addrest,
Ploughs her bold course across the wondering seas;
For, sooth to say, ambition, in the breast
Of youthful heroes, is no sullen fire,
But one that leaps to meet the fanning breeze.

XVI

WARS OF YORK AND LANCASTER

Thus is the storm abated by the craft
Of a shrewd Counsellor, eager to protect
The Church, whose power hath recently been checked,
Whose monstrous riches threatened. So the shaft
Of victory mounts high, and blood is quaffed
In fields that rival Cressy and Poictiers—
Pride to be washed away by bitter tears!
For deep as Hell itself, the avenging draught
Of civil slaughter. Yet, while temporal power
Is by these shocks exhausted, spiritual truth
Maintains the else endangered gift of life;
Proceeds from infancy to lusty youth;
And, under cover of this woeful strife,
Gathers unblighted strength from hour to hour.

XVII

WICLIFFE

Once more the Church is seized with sudden fear,
And at her call is Wicliffe disinhumed:
Yea, his dry bones to ashes are consumed
And flung into the brook that travels near;
Forthwith, that ancient Voice which Streams can hear
Thus speaks (that Voice which walks upon the wind,
Though seldom heard by busy human kind)—
"As thou these ashes, little Brook! wilt bear
"Into the Avon, Avon to the tide
"Of Severn, Severn to the narrow seas,
"Into main Ocean they, this deed accurst
"An emblem yields to friends and enemies
"How the bold Teacher's Doctrine, sanctified
"By truth, shall spread, throughout the world dispersed."

XVIII

CORRUPTIONS OF THE HIGHER CLERGY

"Woe to you, Prelates! rioting in ease
"And cumbrous wealth—the shame of your estate;

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[1] See Note.

"You, on whose progress dazzling trains await
"Of pompous horses; whom vain titles please;
"Who will be served by others on their knees,
"Yet will yourselves to God no service pay;
"Pastors who neither take nor point the way
"To Heaven; for, either lost in vanities
"Ye have no skill to teach, or if ye know
"And speak the word——". Alas! of fearful things
'Tis the most fearful when the people's eye
Abuse hath cleared from vain imaginings;
And taught the general voice to prophesy
Of Justice armed, and Pride to be laid low.

XIX

ABUSE OF MONASTIC POWER

AND what is Penance with her knotted thong;
Mortification with the shirt of hair,
Wan cheek, and knees indúrated with prayer,
Vigils, and fastings rigorous as long;
If cloistered Avarice scruple not to wrong
The pious, humble, useful Secular,
And rob the people of his daily care,
Scorning that world whose blindness makes her strong?
Inversion strange! that, unto One who lives
For self, and struggles with himself alone,
The amplest share of heavenly favour gives;
That to a Monk allots, both in the esteem
Of God and man, place higher than to him
Who on the good of others builds his own!

XX

MONASTIC VOLUPTUOUSNESS

YET more,—round many a Convent's blazing fire
Unhallowed threads of revelry are spun;
There Venus sits disguisèd like a Nun,—
While Bacchus, clothed in semblance of a Friar,
Pours out his choicest beverage high and higher
Sparkling, until it cannot choose but run
Over the bowl, whose silver lip hath won
An instant kiss of masterful desire—
To stay the precious waste. Through every brain
The domination of the sprightly juice
Spreads high conceits to madding Fancy dear,
Till the arched roof, with resolute abuse
Of its grave echoes, swells a choral strain,
Whose votive burthen is—"OUR KINGDOM'S HERE!"

XXI

DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES

THREATS come which no submission may assuage,
No sacrifice avert, no power dispute;
The tapers shall be quenched, the belfries mute,
And, 'mid their choirs unroofed by selfish rage,
The warbling wren shall find a leafy cage;
The gadding bramble hang her purple fruit;
And the green lizard and the gilded newt
Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.[1]
The owl of evening and the woodland fox
For their abode the shrines of Waltham choose:
Proud Glastonbury can no more refuse
To stoop her head before these desperate shocks—
She whose high pomp displaced, as story tells,
Arimathean Joseph's wattled cells.

XXII

THE SAME SUBJECT

THE lovely Nun (submissive, but more meek
Through saintly habit than from effort due
To unrelenting mandates that pursue
With equal wrath the steps of strong and weak)
Goes forth—unveiling timidly a cheek
Suffused with blushes of celestial hue,
While through the Convent's gate to open view

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[1] See Note.

Softly she glides, another home to seek.
Not Iris, issuing from her cloudy shrine,
An Apparition more divinely bright!
Not more attractive to the dazzled sight
Those watery glories, on the stormy brine
Poured forth, while summer suns at distance shine,
And the green vales lie hushed in sober light!

XXIII

CONTINUED

Yet many a Novice of the cloistral shade,
And many chained by vows, with eager glee
The warrant hail, exulting to be free;
Like ships before whose keels, full long embayed
In polar ice, propitious winds have made
Unlooked-for outlet to an open sea,
Their liquid world, for bold discovery,
In all her quarters temptingly displayed!
Hope guides the young; but when the old must pass
The threshold, whither shall they turn to find
The hospitality—the alms (alas!
Alms may be needed) which that House bestowed?
Can they, in faith and worship, train the mind
To keep this new and questionable road?

XXIV

SAINTS

Ye, too, must fly before a chasing hand,
Angels and Saints, in every hamlet mourned!
Ah! if the old idolatry be spurned,
Let not your radiant Shapes desert the Land:
Her adoration was not your demand,
The fond heart proffered it—the servile heart;
And therefore are ye summoned to depart,
Michael, and thou, St. George, whose flaming brand
The Dragon quelled; and valiant Margaret
Whose rival sword a like Opponent slew:
And rapt Cecilia seraph-haunted Queen
Of harmony; and weeping Magdalene,
Who in the penitential desert met
Gales sweet as those that over Eden blew!

XXV

THE VIRGIN

Mother! whose virgin bosom was uncrost
With the least shade of thought to sin allied;
Woman! above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
Purer than foam on central ocean tost;
Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak strewn
With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon
Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast;
Thy Image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend,
As to a visible Power, in which did blend
All that was mixed and reconciled in Thee
Of mother's love with maiden purity,
Of high with low, celestial with terrene!

XXVI

APOLOGY

Not utterly unworthy to endure
Was the supremacy of crafty Rome;
Age after age to the arch of Christendom
Aërial keystone haughtily secure;
Supremacy from Heaven transmitted pure,
As many hold; and, therefore, to the tomb
Pass, some through fire—and by the scaffold some—
Like saintly Fisher, and unbending More.
"Lightly for both the bosom's lord did sit
"Upon his throne;" unsoftened, undismayed
By aught that mingled with the tragic scene
Of pity or fear: and More's gay genius played
With the inoffensive sword of native wit,
Than the bare axe more luminous and keen.

XXVII

IMAGINATIVE REGRETS

DEEP is the lamentation! Not alone
From Sages justly honoured by mankind;
But from the ghostly tenants of the wind,
Demons and Spirits, many a dolorous groan
Issues for that dominion overthrown:
Proud Tiber grieves, and far-off Ganges, blind
As his own worshippers: and Nile, reclined
Upon his monstrous urn, the farewell moan
Renews. Through every forest, cave, and den,
Where frauds were hatched of old, hath sorrow past—
Hangs o'er the Arabian Prophet's native Waste,
Where once his airy helpers schemed and planned
'Mid spectral lakes bemocking thirsty men,
And stalking pillars built of fiery sand.

XXVIII

REFLECTIONS

GRANT, that by this unsparing hurricane
Green leaves with yellow mixed are torn away,
And goodly fruitage with the mother spray;
'Twere madness—wished we, therefore, to detain,
With hands stretched forth in mollified disdain,
The "trumpery" that ascends in bare display—
Bulls, pardons, relics, cowls black, white, and grey—
Upwhirled, and flying o'er the ethereal plain
Fast bound for Limbo Lake. And yet not choice
But habit rules the unreflecting herd,
And airy bonds are hardest to disown;
Hence, with the spiritual sovereignty transferred
Unto itself, the Crown assumes a voice
Of reckless mastery, hitherto unknown.

XXIX

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

BUT, to outweigh all harm, the sacred Book,
In dusty sequestration wrapt too long,
Assumes the accents of our native tongue;
And he who guides the plough, or wields the crook,
With understanding spirit now may look
Upon her records, listen to her song,
And sift her laws—much wondering that the wrong,
Which Faith has suffered, Heaven could calmly brook.
Transcendent boon! noblest that earthly King
Ever bestowed to equalize and bless
Under the weight of mortal wretchedness!
But passions spread like plagues, and thousands wild
With bigotry shall tread the Offering
Beneath their feet, detested and defiled.

XXX

THE POINT AT ISSUE

FOR what contend the wise?—for nothing less
Than that the Soul, freed from the bonds of Sense,
And to her God restored by evidence
Of things not seen, drawn forth from their recess,
Root there, and not in forms, her holiness;—
For Faith, which to the Patriarchs did dispense
Sure guidance, ere a ceremonial fence
Was needful round men thirsting to transgress;—
For Faith, more perfect still, with which the Lord
Of all, himself a Spirit, in the youth
Of Christian aspiration, deigned to fill
The temples of their hearts who, with his word
Informed, were resolute to do his will,
And worship him in spirit and in truth.

XXXI

EDWARD VI

"SWEET is the holiness of Youth"—so felt
Time-honoured Chaucer speaking through that Lay
By which the Prioress beguiled the way,
And many a Pilgrim's rugged heart did melt.

Hadst thou, loved Bard! whose spirit often dwelt
In the clear land of vision, but foreseen
King, child, and seraph, blended in the mien
Of pious Edward kneeling as he knelt
In meek and simple infancy, what joy
For universal Christendom had thrilled
Thy heart! what hopes inspired thy genius, skilled
(O great Precursor, genuine morning Star)
The lucid shafts of reason to employ,
Piercing the Papal darkness from afar!

XXXII

EDWARD SIGNING THE WARRANT FOR THE EXECUTION OF JOAN OF KENT

THE tears of man in various measure gush
From various sources; gently overflow
From blissful transport some—from clefts of woe
Some with ungovernable impulse rush;
And some, coëval with the earliest blush
Of infant passion, scarcely dare to show
Their pearly lustre—coming but to go;
And some break forth when others' sorrows crush
The sympathising heart. Nor these, nor yet
The noblest drops to admiration known,
To gratitude, to injuries forgiven—
Claim Heaven's regard like waters that have wet
The innocent eyes of youthful Monarchs driven
To pen the mandates, nature doth disown.

XXXIII

REVIVAL OF POPERY

THE saintly Youth has ceased to rule, discrowned
By unrelenting Death. O People keen
For change, to whom the new looks always green!
Rejoicing did they cast upon the ground
Their Gods of wood and stone; and, at the sound
Of counter-proclamation, now are seen,
(Proud triumph is it for a sullen Queen!)
Lifting them up, the worship to confound
Of the Most High. Again do they invoke
The Creature, to the Creature glory give;
Again with frankincense the altars smoke
Like those the Heathen served; and mass is sung;
And prayer, man's rational prerogative,
Runs through blind channels of an unknown tongue.

XXXIV

LATIMER AND RIDLEY

How fast the Marian death-list is unrolled!
See Latimer and Ridley in the might
Of Faith stand coupled for a common flight!
One (like those prophets whom God sent of old)
Transfigured,[1] from this kindling hath foretold
A torch of inextinguishable light;
The Other gains a confidence as bold;
And thus they foil their enemy's despite.
The penal instruments, the shows of crime,
Are glorified while this once-mitred pair
Of saintly Friends the "murtherer's chain partake,
Corded, and burning at the social stake:"
Earth never witnessed object more sublime
In constancy, in fellowship more fair!

XXXV

CRANMER

OUTSTRETCHING flameward his upbraided hand
(O God of mercy, may no earthly Seat
Of judgment such presumptuous doom repeat!)
Amid the shuddering throng doth Cranmer stand;
Firm as the stake to which with iron band
His frame is tied; firm from the naked feet
To the bare head. The victory is complete;
The shrouded Body to the Soul's command
Answers with more than Indian fortitude,
Through all her nerves with finer sense endued,
Till breath departs in blissful aspiration:

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[1] See Note.

Then, 'mid the ghastly ruins of the fire,
Behold the unalterable heart entire,
Emblem of faith untouched, miraculous attestation![1]

XXXVI

GENERAL VIEW OF THE TROUBLES OF THE REFORMATION

AID, glorious Martyrs, from your fields of light,
Our mortal ken! Inspire a perfect trust
(While we look round) that Heaven's decrees are just:
Which few can hold committed to a fight
That shows, ev'n on its better side, the might
Of proud Self-will, Rapacity, and Lust,
'Mid clouds enveloped of polemic dust,
Which showers of blood seem rather to incite
Than to allay. Anathemas are hurled
From both sides; veteran thunders (the brute test
Of truth) are met by fulminations new—
Tartarean flags are caught at, and unfurled—
Friends strike at friends—the flying shall pursue—
And Victory sickens, ignorant where to rest!

XXXVII

ENGLISH REFORMERS IN EXILE

SCATTERING, like birds escaped the fowler's net,
Some seek with timely flight a foreign strand;
Most happy, re-assembled in a land
By dauntless Luther freed, could they forget
Their Country's woes. But scarcely have they met,
Partners in faith, and brothers in distress,
Free to pour forth their common thankfulness,
Ere hope declines:—their union is beset
With speculative notions rashly sown,
Whence thickly-sprouting growth of poisonous weeds;
Their forms are broken staves; their passions, steeds
That master them. How enviably blest
Is he who can, by help of grace, enthrone
The peace of God within his single breast!

XXXVIII

ELIZABETH

HAIL, Virgin Queen! o'er many an envious bar
Triumphant, snatched from many a treacherous wile!
All hail, sage Lady, whom a grateful Isle
Hath blest, respiring from that dismal war
Stilled by thy voice! But quickly from afar
Defiance breathes with more malignant aim;
And alien storms with home-bred ferments claim
Portentous fellowship. Her silver car,
By sleepless prudence ruled, glides slowly on;
Unhurt by violence, from menaced taint
Emerging pure, and seemingly more bright:
Ah! wherefore yields it to a foul constraint
Black as the clouds its beams dispersed, while shone,
By men and angels blest, the glorious light?

XXXIX

EMINENT REFORMERS

METHINKS that I could trip o'er heaviest soil,
Light as a buoyant bark from wave to wave,
Were mine the trusty staff that JEWEL gave
To youthful HOOKER, in familiar style
The gift exalting, and with playful smile:[2]
For thus equipped, and bearing on his head
The Donor's farewell blessing, can he dread
Tempest, or length of way, or weight of toil?—
More sweet than odours caught by him who sails
Near spicy shores of Araby the blest,
A thousand times more exquisitely sweet,
The freight of holy feeling which we meet,
In thoughtful moments, wafted by the gales
From fields where good men walk, or bowers wherein they rest.

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[1] For the belief in this fact, see the contemporary Historians.

[2] See Note.

XL

THE SAME

HOLY and heavenly Spirits as they are,
Spotless in life, and eloquent as wise,
With what entire affection do they prize
Their Church reformed! labouring with earnest care
To baffle all that may her strength impair;
That Church, the unperverted Gospel's seat;
In their afflictions a divine retreat;
Source of their liveliest hope, and tenderest prayer!—
The truth exploring with an equal mind,
In doctrine and communion they have sought
Firmly between the two extremes to steer;
But theirs the wise man's ordinary lot—
To trace right courses for the stubborn blind,
And prophesy to ears that will not hear.

XLI

DISTRACTIONS

MEN, who have ceased to reverence, soon defy,
Their forefathers; lo! sects are formed, and split
With morbid restlessness;—the ecstatic fit
Spreads wide; though special mysteries multiply,
The Saints must govern, is their common cry;
And so they labour, deeming Holy Writ
Disgraced by aught that seems content to sit
Beneath the roof of settled Modesty.
The Romanist exults; fresh hope he draws
From the confusion, craftily incites
The overweening, personates the mad—[1]
To heap disgust upon the worthier Cause:
Totters the Throne; the new-born Church is sad,
For every wave against her peace unites.

XLII

GUNPOWDER PLOT

FEAR hath a hundred eyes that all agree
To plague her beating heart; and there is one
(Nor idlest that!) which holds communion
With things that were not, yet were *meant* to be.
Aghast within its gloomy cavity
That eye (which sees as if fulfilled and done
Crimes that might stop the motion of the sun)
Beholds the horrible catastrophe
Of an assembled Senate unredeemed
From subterraneous Treason's darkling power:
Merciless act of sorrow infinite!
Worse than the product of that dismal night,
When gushing, copious as a thunder-shower,
The blood of Huguenots through Paris streamed.

XLIII

ILLUSTRATION

THE JUNG-FRAU AND THE FALL OF THE RHINE NEAR SCHAFFHAUSEN

THE Virgin Mountain,[2] wearing like a Queen
A brilliant crown of everlasting snow,
Sheds ruin from her sides; and men below
Wonder that aught of aspect so serene
Can link with desolation. Smooth and green,
And seeming, at a little distance, slow,
The waters of the Rhine; but on they go
Fretting and whitening, keener and more keen;
Till madness seizes on the whole wide Flood,
Turned to a fearful Thing whose nostrils breathe
Blasts of tempestuous smoke—wherewith he tries
To hide himself, but only magnifies;
And doth in more conspicuous torment writhe,
Deafening the region in his ireful mood.

XLIV

TROUBLES OF CHARLES THE FIRST

EVEN such the contrast that, where'er we move,

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[1] See Note.

[2] The Jung-frau.

To the mind's eye Religion doth present;
Now with her own deep quietness content;
Then, like the mountain, thundering from above
Against the ancient pine-trees of the grove
And the Land's humblest comforts. Now her mood
Recalls the transformation of the flood,
Whose rage the gentle skies in vain reprove;
Earth cannot check. O terrible excess
Of headstrong will! Can this be Piety?
No—some fierce Maniac hath usurped her name;
And scourges England struggling to be free:
Her peace destroyed! her hopes a wilderness!
Her blessings cursed—her glory turned to shame!

XLV

LAUD[1]

PREJUDGED by foes determined not to spare,
An old weak Man for vengeance thrown aside,
Laud, "in the painful art of dying" tried,
(Like a poor bird entangled in a snare
Whose heart still flutters, though his wings forbear
To stir in useless struggle) hath relied
On hope that conscious innocence supplied,
And in his prison breathes celestial air.
Why tarries then thy chariot? Wherefore stay,
O Death! the ensanguined yet triumphant wheels,
Which thou prepar'st, full often, to convey
(What time a State with madding faction reels)
The Saint or Patriot to the world that heals
All wounds, all perturbations doth allay?

XLVI

AFFLICTIONS OF ENGLAND

HARP! could'st thou venture, on thy boldest string,
The faintest note to echo which the blast
Caught from the hand of Moses as it passed
O'er Sinai's top, or from the Shepherd-king,
Early awake, by Siloa's brook, to sing
Of dread Jehovah; then, should wood and waste
Hear also of that name, and mercy cast
Off to the mountains, like a covering
Of which the Lord was weary. Weep, oh! weep,
Weep with the good, beholding King and Priest
Despised by that stern God to whom they raise
Their suppliant hands; but holy is the feast
He keepeth; like the firmament his ways:
His statutes like the chambers of the deep.

PART III

FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE PRESENT TIMES

When I came to this part of the series I had the dream described in this Sonnet. The figure was that of my daughter, and the whole passed exactly as here represented. The Sonnet was composed on the middle road leading from Grasmere to Ambleside: it was begun as I left the last house of the vale, and finished, word for word as it now stands, before I came in view of Rydal. I wish I could say the same of the five or six hundred I have written: most of them were frequently retouched in the course of composition, and, not a few, laboriously.

I have only further to observe that the intended Church which prompted these Sonnets was erected on Coleorton Moor towards the centre of a very populous parish between three and four miles from Ashby-de-la-Zouch, on the road to Loughborough, and has proved, I believe, a great benefit to the neighbourhood.

I

I SAW the figure of a lovely Maid
Seated alone beneath a darksome tree,
Whose fondly-overhanging canopy
Set off her brightness with a pleasing shade.
No Spirit was she; *that* my heart betrayed,
For she was one I loved exceedingly;
But while I gazed in tender reverie
(Or was it sleep that with my Fancy played?)
The bright corporeal presence—form and face—

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[1] See Note.

Remaining still distinct grew thin and rare,
Like sunny mist;—at length the golden hair,
Shape, limbs, and heavenly features, keeping pace
Each with the other in a lingering race
Of dissolution, melted into air.

II

PATRIOTIC SYMPATHIES

LAST night, without a voice, that Vision spake
Fear to my Soul, and sadness which might seem
Wholly dissevered from our present theme;
Yet, my belovèd Country! I partake
Of kindred agitations for thy sake;
Thou, too, dost visit oft my midnight dream;
Thy glory meets me with the earliest beam
Of light, which tells that Morning is awake.
If aught impair thy beauty or destroy,
Or but forebode destruction, I deplore
With filial love the sad vicissitude;
If thou hast fallen, and righteous Heaven restore
The prostrate, then my spring-time is renewed,
And sorrow bartered for exceeding joy.

III

CHARLES THE SECOND

WHO comes—with rapture greeted, and caressed
With frantic love—his kingdom to regain?
Him Virtue's Nurse, Adversity, in vain
Received, and fostered in her iron breast:
For all she taught of hardiest and of best,
Or would have taught, by discipline of pain
And long privation, now dissolves amain,
Or is remembered only to give zest
To wantonness.—Away, Circean revels!
But for what gain? if England soon must sink
Into a gulf which all distinction levels—
That bigotry may swallow the good name,
And, with that draught, the life-blood: misery, shame,
By Poets loathed; from which Historians shrink!

IV

LATITUDINARIANISM

YET Truth is keenly sought for, and the wind
Charged with rich words poured out in thought's defence;
Whether the Church inspire that eloquence,
Or a Platonic Piety confined
To the sole temple of the inward mind;
And One there is who builds immortal lays,
Though doomed to tread in solitary ways,
Darkness before and danger's voice behind;
Yet not alone, nor helpless to repel
Sad thoughts; for from above the starry sphere
Come secrets, whispered nightly to his ear;
And the pure spirit of celestial light
Shines through his soul—"that he may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight."

V

WALTON'S BOOK OF LIVES

THERE are no colours in the fairest sky
So fair as these. The feather, whence the pen
Was shaped that traced the lives of these good men,
Dropped from an Angel's wing. With moistened eye
We read of faith and purest charity
In Statesman, Priest, and humble Citizen:
Oh could we copy their mild virtues, then
What joy to live, what blessedness to die!
Methinks their very names shine still and bright;
Apart—like glow-worms on a summer night;
Or lonely tapers when from far they fling
A guiding ray; or seen—like stars on high,
Satellites burning in a lucid ring
Around meek Walton's heavenly memory.

VI

CLERICAL INTEGRITY

NOR shall the eternal roll of praise reject
Those Unconforming; whom one rigorous day

Drives from their Cures, a voluntary prey
To poverty, and grief, and disrespect.
And some to want—as if by tempests wrecked
On a wild coast how destitute! did They
Feel not that Conscience never can betray,
That peace of mind is Virtue's sure effect.
Their altars they forego, their homes they quit,
Fields which they love, and paths they daily trod,
And cast the future upon Providence;
As men the dictate of whose inward sense
Outweighs the world; whom self-deceiving wit
Lures not from what they deem the cause of God.

VII

PERSECUTION OF THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS

When Alpine Vales threw forth a suppliant cry,
The Majesty of England interposed
And the sword stopped; the bleeding wounds were closed;
And Faith preserved her ancient purity.
How little boots that precedent of good,
Scorned or forgotten, Thou canst testify,
For England's shame, O Sister Realm! from wood,
Mountain, and moor, and crowded street, where lie
The headless martyrs of the Covenant,
Slain by Compatriot-protestants that draw
From councils senseless as intolerant
Their warrant. Bodies fall by wild sword-law;
But who would force the Soul, tilts with a straw
Against a Champion cased in adamant.

VIII

ACQUITTAL OF THE BISHOPS

A voice, from long-expecting thousands sent,
Shatters the air, and troubles tower and spire;
For Justice hath absolved the innocent,
And Tyranny is balked of her desire:
Up, down, the busy Thames—rapid as fire
Coursing a train of gunpowder—it went,
And transport finds in every street a vent,
Till the whole City rings like one vast quire.
The Fathers urge the People to be still,
With outstretched hands and earnest speech—in vain!
Yea, many, haply wont to entertain
Small reverence for the mitre's offices,
And to Religion's self no friendly will,
A Prelate's blessing ask on bended knees.

IX

WILLIAM THE THIRD

Calm as an under-current, strong to draw
Millions of waves into itself, and run,
From sea to sea, impervious to the sun
And ploughing storm, the spirit of Nassau
Swerves not, (how blest if by religious awe
Swayed, and thereby enabled to contend
With the wide world's commotions) from its end
Swerves not—diverted by a casual law.
Had mortal action e'er a nobler scope?
The Hero comes to liberate, not defy;
And, while he marches on with stedfast hope,
Conqueror beloved! expected anxiously!
The vacillating Bondman of the Pope
Shrinks from the verdict of his stedfast eye.

X

OBLIGATIONS OF CIVIL TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Ungrateful Country, if thou e'er forget
The sons who for thy civil rights have bled!
How, like a Roman, Sidney bowed his head,
And Russel's milder blood the scaffold wet;
But these had fallen for profitless regret
Had not thy holy Church her champions bred,
And claims from other worlds inspirited
The star of Liberty to rise. Nor yet
(Grave this within thy heart!) if spiritual things

Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear,
Shalt thou thy humbler franchises support,
However hardly won or justly dear:
What came from heaven to heaven by nature clings,
And, if dissevered thence, its course is short.

XI

SACHEVEREL

A SUDDEN conflict rises from the swell
Of a proud slavery met by tenets strained
In Liberty's behalf. Fears, true or feigned,
Spread through all ranks; and lo! the Sentinel
Who loudest rang his pulpit 'larum bell,
Stands at the Bar, absolved by female eyes
Mingling their glances with grave flatteries
Lavished on *Him*—that England may rebel
Against her ancient virtue. HIGH and LOW,
Watchwords of Party, on all tongues are rife;
As if a Church, though sprung from heaven, must owe
To opposites and fierce extremes her life,—
Not to the golden mean, and quiet flow
Of truths that soften hatred, temper strife.

XII

DOWN a swift Stream, thus far, a bold design
Have we pursued, with livelier stir of heart
Than his who sees, borne forward by the Rhine,
The living landscapes greet him, and depart;
Sees spires fast sinking—up again to start!
And strives the towers to number, that recline
O'er the dark steeps, or on the horizon line
Striding with shattered crests his eye athwart,
So have we hurried on with troubled pleasure:
Henceforth, as on the bosom of a stream
That slackens, and spreads wide a watery gleam,
We, nothing loth a lingering course to measure,
May gather up our thoughts, and mark at leisure
How widely spread the interests of our theme.

XIII

ASPECTS OF CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA

I. THE PILGRIM FATHERS[1]

WELL worthy to be magnified are they
Who, with sad hearts, of friends and country took
A last farewell, their loved abodes forsook,
And hallowed ground in which their fathers lay;
Then to the new-found World explored their way,
That so a Church, unforced, uncalled to brook
Ritual restraints, within some sheltering nook
Her Lord might worship and his word obey
In freedom. Men they were who could not bend;
Blest Pilgrims, surely, as they took for guide
A will by sovereign Conscience sanctified;
Blest while their Spirits from the woods ascend
Along a Galaxy that knows no end,
But in His glory who for Sinners died.

XIV

II. CONTINUED

FROM Rite and Ordinance abused they fled
To Wilds where both were utterly unknown;
But not to them had Providence foreshown
What benefits are missed, what evils bred,
In worship neither raised nor limited
Save by Self-will. Lo! from that distant shore,
For Rite and Ordinance, Piety is led
Back to the Land those Pilgrims left of yore,
Led by her own free choice. So Truth and Love
By Conscience governed do their steps retrace.—

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[1] This and the two following were added in 1842. See Note.

Fathers! your Virtues, such the power of grace,
Their spirit, in your Children, thus approve.
Transcendent over time, unbound by place,
Concord and Charity in circles move.

XV

III. CONCLUDED.—AMERICAN EPISCOPACY

Patriots informed with Apostolic light
Were they, who, when their Country had been freed,
Bowing with reverence to the ancient creed,
Fixed on the frame of England's Church their sight,
And strove in filial love to reunite
What force had severed. Thence they fetched the seed
Of Christian unity, and won a meed
Of praise from Heaven. To Thee, O saintly White,
Patriarch of a wide-spreading family,
Remotest lands and unborn times shall turn,
Whether they would restore or build—to Thee,
As one who rightly taught how zeal should burn,
As one who drew from out Faith's holiest urn
The purest stream of patient Energy.

XVI

Bishops and Priests, blessèd are ye, if deep
(As yours above all offices is high)
Deep in your hearts the sense of duty lie;
Charged as ye are by Christ to feed and keep
From wolves your portion of his chosen sheep:
Labouring as ever in your Master's sight,
Making your hardest task your best delight,
What perfect glory ye in Heaven shall reap!—
But, in the solemn Office which ye sought
And undertook premonished, if unsound
Your practice prove, faithless though but in thought,
Bishops and Priests, think what a gulf profound
Awaits you then, if they were rightly taught
Who framed the Ordinance by your lives disowned!

XVII

PLACES OF WORSHIP

As star that shines dependent upon star
Is to the sky while we look up and love;
As to the deep fair ships which though they move
Seem fixed, to eyes that watch them from afar;
As to the sandy desert fountains are,
With palm-groves shaded at wide intervals,
Whose fruit around the sun-burnt Native falls
Of roving tired or desultory war—
Such to this British Isle her christian Fanes,
Each linked to each for kindred services;
Her Spires, her Steeple-towers with glittering vanes
Far-kenned, her Chapels lurking among trees,
Where a few villagers on bended knees
Find solace which a busy world disdains.

XVIII

PASTORAL CHARACTER

A genial hearth, a hospitable board,
And a refined rusticity, belong
To the neat mansion,[1] where, his flock among,
The learned Pastor dwells, their watchful Lord.
Though meek and patient as a sheathèd sword;
Though pride's least lurking thought appear a wrong
To human kind; though peace be on his tongue,
Gentleness in his heart—can earth afford
Such genuine state, pre-eminence so free,
As when, arrayed in Christ's authority,
He from the pulpit lifts his awful hand;
Conjures, implores, and labours all he can
For re-subjecting to divine command
The stubborn spirit of rebellious man?

[1] See Note.

XIX

THE LITURGY

Yes, if the intensities of hope and fear
Attract us still, and passionate exercise
Of lofty thoughts, the way before us lies
Distinct with signs, through which in set career,
As through a zodiac, moves the ritual year
Of England's Church; stupendous mysteries!
Which whoso travels in her bosom eyes,
As he approaches them, with solemn cheer.
Upon that circle traced from sacred story
We only dare to cast a transient glance,
Trusting in hope that Others may advance
With mind intent upon the King of Glory,
From his mild advent till his countenance
Shall dissipate the seas and mountains hoary.

XX

BAPTISM

Dear be the Church, that, watching o'er the needs
Of Infancy, provides a timely shower
Whose virtue changes to a christian Flower
A Growth from sinful Nature's bed of weeds!—
Fitliest beneath the sacred roof proceeds
The ministration; while parental Love
Looks on, and Grace descendeth from above
As the high service pledges now, now pleads.
There, should vain thoughts outspread their wings and fly
To meet the coming hours of festal mirth,
The tombs—which hear and answer that brief cry,
The Infant's notice of his second birth—
Recall the wandering Soul to sympathy
With what man hopes from Heaven, yet fears from Earth.

XXI

SPONSORS

Father!—to God himself we cannot give
A holier name! then lightly do not bear
Both names conjoined, but of thy spiritual care
Be duly mindful: still more sensitive
Do Thou, in truth a second Mother, strive
Against disheartening custom, that by Thee
Watched, and with love and pious industry
Tended at need, the adopted Plant may thrive
For everlasting bloom. Benign and pure
This Ordinance, whether loss it would supply,
Prevent omission, help deficiency,
Or seek to make assurance doubly sure.
Shame if the consecrated Vow be found
An idle form, the Word an empty sound!

XXII

CATECHISING

From Little down to Least, in due degree,
Around the Pastor, each in new-wrought vest,
Each with a vernal posy at his breast,
We stood, a trembling, earnest Company!
With low soft murmur, like a distant bee,
Some spake, by thought-perplexing fears betrayed;
And some a bold unerring answer made:
How fluttered then thy anxious heart for me,
Belovèd Mother! Thou whose happy hand
Had bound the flowers I wore, with faithful tie:
Sweet flowers! at whose inaudible command
Her countenance, phantom-like, doth re-appear:
O lost too early for the frequent tear,
And ill requited by this heartfelt sigh!

XXIII

CONFIRMATION

The Young-ones gathered in from hill and dale,
With holiday delight on every brow:
'Tis passed away; far other thoughts prevail;
For they are taking the baptismal Vow
Upon their conscious selves; their own lips speak
The solemn promise. Strongest sinews fail,

And many a blooming, many a lovely, cheek
Under the holy fear of God turns pale;
While on each head his lawn-robed Servant lays
An apostolic hand, and with prayer seals
The Covenant. The Omnipotent will raise
Their feeble Souls; and bear with *his* regrets,
Who, looking round the fair assemblage, feels
That ere the Sun goes down their childhood sets.

XXIV

CONFIRMATION CONTINUED

I saw a Mother's eye intensely bent
Upon a Maiden trembling as she knelt;
In and for whom the pious Mother felt
Things that we judge of by a light too faint:
Tell, if ye may, some star-crowned Muse, or Saint!
Tell what rushed in, from what she was relieved—
Then, when her Child the hallowing touch received,
And such vibration through the Mother went
That tears burst forth amain. Did gleams appear?
Opened a vision of that blissful place
Where dwells a Sister-child? And was power given
Part of her lost One's glory back to trace
Even to this Rite? For thus *She* knelt, and, ere
The summer-leaf had faded, passed to Heaven.

XXV

SACRAMENT

By chain yet stronger must the Soul be tied:
One duty more, last stage of this ascent,
Brings to thy food, mysterious Sacrament!
The Offspring, haply, at the Parent's side;
But not till They, with all that do abide
In Heaven, have lifted up their hearts to laud
And magnify the glorious name of God,
Fountain of grace, whose Son for sinners died.
Ye, who have duly weighed the summons, pause
No longer; ye, whom to the saving rite
The Altar calls, come early under laws
That can secure for you a path of light
Through gloomiest shade; put on (nor dread its weight)
Armour divine, and conquer in your cause!

XXVI

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

The Vested Priest before the Altar stands;
Approach, come gladly, ye prepared, in sight
Of God and chosen friends, your troth to plight
With the symbolic ring, and willing hands
Solemnly joined. Now sanctify the bands
O Father!—to the Espoused thy blessing give,
That mutually assisted they may live
Obedient, as here taught, to thy commands.
So prays the Church, to consecrate a Vow
"The which would endless matrimony make;"
Union that shadows forth and doth partake
A mystery potent human love to endow
With heavenly, each more prized for the other's sake;
Weep not, meek Bride! uplift thy timid brow.

XXVII

THANKSGIVING AFTER CHILDBIRTH

Woman! the Power who left his throne on high,
And deigned to wear the robe of flesh we wear,
The Power that thro' the straits of Infancy
Did pass dependent on maternal care,
His own humanity with Thee will share,
Pleased with the thanks that in his People's eye
Thou offerest up for safe Delivery
From Childbirth's perilous throes. And should the Heir
Of thy fond hopes hereafter walk inclined
To courses fit to make a mother rue

That ever he was born, a glance of mind
Cast upon this observance may renew
A better will; and, in the imagined view
Of thee thus kneeling, safety he may find.

XXVIII

VISITATION OF THE SICK

The Sabbath bells renew the inviting peal;
Glad music! yet there be that, worn with pain
And sickness, listen where they long have lain,
In sadness listen. With maternal zeal
Inspired, the Church sends ministers to kneel
Beside the afflicted; to sustain with prayer,
And soothe the heart confession hath laid bare—
That pardon, from God's throne, may set its seal
On a true Penitent. When breath departs
From one disburthened so, so comforted,
His Spirit Angels greet; and ours be hope
That, if the Sufferer rise from his sick-bed,
Hence he will gain a firmer mind, to cope
With a bad world, and foil the Tempter's arts.

XXIX

THE COMMINATION SERVICE

Shun not this Rite, neglected, yea abhorred,
By some of unreflecting mind, as calling
Man to curse man, (thought monstrous and appalling.)
Go thou and hear the threatenings of the Lord;
Listening within his Temple see his sword
Unsheathed in wrath to strike the offender's head,
Thy own, if sorrow for thy sin be dead,
Guilt unrepented, pardon unimplored.
Two aspects bears Truth needful for salvation;
Who knows not *that?*—yet would this delicate age
Look only on the Gospel's brighter page:
Let light and dark duly our thoughts employ;
So shall the fearful words of Commination
Yield timely fruit of peace and love and joy.

XXX

FORMS OF PRAYER AT SEA

To kneeling Worshippers no earthly floor
Gives holier invitation than the deck
Of a storm-shattered Vessel saved from Wreck
(When all that Man could do availed no more)
By him who raised the Tempest and restrains:
Happy the crew who this have felt, and pour
Forth for his mercy, as the Church ordains,
Solemn thanksgiving. Nor will *they* implore
In vain who, for a rightful cause, give breath
To words the Church prescribes aiding the lip
For the heart's sake, ere ship with hostile ship
Encounters, armed for work of pain and death.
Suppliants! the God to whom your cause ye trust
Will listen, and ye know that He is just.

XXXI

FUNERAL SERVICE

From the Baptismal hour, thro' weal and woe,
The Church extends her care to thought and deed;
Nor quits the Body when the Soul is freed,
The mortal weight cast off to be laid low.
Blest Rite for him who hears in faith, "I know
That my Redeemer liveth,"—hears each word
That follows—striking on some kindred chord
Deep in the thankful heart;—yet tears will flow.
Man is as grass that springeth up at morn,
Grows green, and is cut down and withereth
Ere nightfall—truth that well may claim a sigh,
Its natural echo; but hope comes reborn
At Jesu's bidding. We rejoice, "O Death,
Where is thy Sting?—O Grave, where is thy Victory?"

XXXII

RURAL CEREMONY[1]

CLOSING the sacred Book which long has fed
Our meditations, give we to a day
Of annual joy one tributary lay;
This day, when, forth by rustic music led,
The village Children, while the sky is red
With evening lights, advance in long array
Through the still churchyard, each with garland gay,
That, carried sceptre-like, o'ertops the head
Of the proud Bearer. To the wide church-door,
Charged with these offerings which their fathers bore
For decoration in the Papal time,
The innocent procession softly moves:—
The spirit of Laud is pleased in heaven's pure clime,
And Hooker's voice the spectacle approves!

XXXIII

REGRETS

WOULD that our scrupulous Sires had dared to leave
Less scanty measure of those graceful rites
And usages, whose due return invites
A stir of mind too natural to deceive;
Giving to Memory help when she would weave
A crown for Hope!—I dread the boasted lights
That all too often are but fiery blights,
Killing the bud o'er which in vain we grieve.
Go, seek, when Christmas snows discomfort bring,
The counter Spirit found in some gay church
Green with fresh holly, every pew a perch
In which the linnet or the thrush might sing,
Merry and loud and safe from prying search,
Strains offered only to the genial Spring.

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[1] See Note.

XXXIV

MUTABILITY

FROM low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

XXXV

OLD ABBEYS

MONASTIC Domes! following my downward way,
Untouched by due regret I marked your fall!
Now, ruin, beauty, ancient stillness, all
Dispose to judgments temperate as we lay
On our past selves in life's declining day:
For as, by discipline of Time made wise,
We learn to tolerate the infirmities
And faults of others—gently as he may,
So with our own the mild Instructor deals,
Teaching us to forget them or forgive.[1]
Perversely curious, then, for hidden ill
Why should we break Time's charitable seals?
Once ye were holy, ye are holy still;
Your spirit freely let me drink, and live!

XXXVI

EMIGRANT FRENCH CLERGY

EVEN while I speak, the sacred roofs of France
Are shattered into dust; and self-exiled

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[1] See Note.

From altars threatened, levelled, or defiled,
Wander the Ministers of God, as chance
Opens a way for life, or consonance
Of faith invites. More welcome to no land
The fugitives than to the British strand,
Where priest and layman with the vigilance
Of true compassion greet them. Creed and test
Vanish before the unreserved embrace
Of catholic humanity:—distrest
They came,—and, while the moral tempest roars
Throughout the Country they have left, our shores
Give to their Faith a fearless resting-place.

XXXVII

CONGRATULATION

Thus all things lead to Charity secured
By THEM who blessed the soft and happy gale
That landward urged the great Deliverer's sail,
Till in the sunny bay his fleet was moored!
Propitious hour!—had we, like them, endured
Sore stress of apprehension,[1] with a mind
Sickened by injuries, dreading worse designed,
From month to month trembling and unassured,
How had we then rejoiced! But we have felt,
As a loved substance, their futurity:
Good, which they dared not hope for, we have seen;
A State whose generous will through earth is dealt;
A State—which, balancing herself between
Licence and slavish order, dares be free.

XXXVIII

NEW CHURCHES

But liberty, and triumphs on the Main,
And laurelled armies, not to be withstood—
What serve they? if, on transitory good
Intent, and sedulous of abject gain,
The State (ah, surely not preserved in vain!)
Forbear to shape due channels which the Flood
Of sacred truth may enter—till it brood
O'er the wide realm, as o'er the Egyptian plain
The all-sustaining Nile. No more—the time
Is conscious of her want; through England's bounds,
In rival haste, the wished-for Temples rise!
I hear their sabbath bells' harmonious chime
Float on the breeze—the heavenliest of all sounds
That vale or hill prolongs or multiplies!

XXXIX

CHURCH TO BE ERECTED

Be this the chosen site; the virgin sod,
Moistened from age to age by dewy eve,
Shall disappear, and grateful earth receive
The corner-stone from hands that build to God.
Yon reverend hawthorns, hardened to the rod
Of winter storms, yet budding cheerfully;
Those forest oaks of Druid memory,
Shall long survive, to shelter the Abode
Of genuine Faith. Where, haply, 'mid this band
Of daisies, shepherds sate of yore and wove
May-garlands, there let the holy altar stand
For kneeling adoration;—while—above,
Broods, visibly portrayed, the mystic Dove,
That shall protect from blasphemy the Land.

XL

CONTINUED

Mine ear has rung, my spirit sunk subdued,
Sharing the strong emotion of the crowd,
When each pale brow to dread hosannas bowed
While clouds of incense mounting veiled the rood,
That glimmered like a pine-tree dimly viewed
Through Alpine vapours. Such appalling rite

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[1] See Note.

Our Church prepares not, trusting to the might
Of simple truth with grace divine imbued;
Yet will we not conceal the precious Cross,
Like men ashamed:[1] the Sun with his first smile
Shall greet that symbol crowning the low Pile:
And the fresh air of incense-breathing morn
Shall wooingly embrace it; and green moss
Creep round its arms through centuries unborn.

XLI

NEW CHURCHYARD

The encircling ground, in native turf arrayed,
Is now by solemn consecration given
To social interests, and to favouring Heaven;
And where the rugged colts their gambols played,
And wild deer bounded through the forest glade,
Unchecked as when by merry Outlaw driven,
Shall hymns of praise resound at morn and even;
And soon, full soon, the lonely Sexton's spade
Shall wound the tender sod. Encincture small,
But infinite its grasp of weal and woe!
Hopes, fears, in never-ending ebb and flow;—
The spousal trembling, and the "dust to dust,"
The prayers, the contrite struggle, and the trust
That to the Almighty Father looks through all.

XLII

CATHEDRALS, ETC.

Open your gates, ye everlasting Piles!
Types of the spiritual Church which God hath reared;
Not loth we quit the newly-hallowed sward
And humble altar, 'mid your sumptuous aisles
To kneel, or thrid your intricate defiles,
Or down the nave to pace in motion slow;
Watching, with upward eye, the tall tower grow
And mount, at every step, with living wiles
Instinct—to rouse the heart and lead the will
By a bright ladder to the world above.
Open your gates, ye Monuments of love
Divine! thou Lincoln, on thy sovereign hill!
Thou, stately York! and Ye, whose splendours cheer
Isis and Cam, to patient Science dear!

XLIII

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white robed Scholars only—this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

XLIV

THE SAME

What awful perspective! while from our sight
With gradual stealth the lateral windows hide
Their Portraitures, their stone-work glimmers, dyed
In the soft chequerings of a sleepy light.
Martyr, or King, or sainted Eremite,
Whoe'er ye be, that thus, yourselves unseen,
Imbue your prison-bars with solemn sheen,

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[1] See Note.

Shine on, until ye fade with coming Night!—
But, from the arms of silence—list! O list!
The music bursteth into second life;
The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife;
Heart-thrilling strains, that cast, before the eye
Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy!

XLV

CONTINUED

They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam:
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
Of awe-struck wisdom droops: or let my path
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome
Hath typified by reach of daring art
Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
As now, when She hath also seen her breast
Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

XLVI

EJACULATION

Glory to God! and to the Power who came
In filial duty, clothed with love divine,
That made his human tabernacle shine
Like Ocean burning with purpureal flame;
Or like the Alpine Mount, that takes its name
From roseate hues, far kenned at morn and even
In hours of peace, or when the storm is driven
Along the nether region's rugged frame![1]
Earth prompts—Heaven urges; let us seek the light,
Studious of that pure intercourse begun
When first our infant brows their lustre won;
So, like the Mountain, may we grow more bright
From unimpeded commerce with the Sun,
At the approach of all-involving night.

XLVII

CONCLUSION

Why sleeps the future, as a snake enrolled,
Coil within coil, at noon-tide? For the Word
Yields, if with unpresumptuous faith explored,
Power at whose touch the sluggard shall unfold
His drowsy rings. Look forth!—that Stream behold,
That Stream upon whose bosom we have passed
Floating at ease while nations have effaced
Nations, and Death has gathered to his fold
Long lines of mighty Kings—look forth, my Soul!
(Nor in this vision be thou slow to trust)
The living Waters, less and less by guilt
Stained and polluted, brighten as they roll,
Till they have reached the eternal City—built
For the perfected Spirit of the just!

MEMORY

A pen—to register; a key—
That winds through secret wards
Are well assigned to Memory
By allegoric Bards.

As aptly, also, might be given
A Pencil to her hand;
That, softening objects, sometimes even
Outstrips the heart's demand;

That smooths foregone distress, the lines
Of lingering care subdues,
Long-vanished happiness refines,
And clothes in brighter hues;

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[1] See Note.

Yet, like a tool of Fancy, works
Those Spectres to dilate
That startle Conscience, as she lurks
Within her lonely seat.

Oh! that our lives, which flee so fast,
In purity were such,
That not an image of the past
Should fear that pencil's touch!

Retirement then might hourly look
Upon a soothing scene,
Age steal to his allotted nook
Contented and serene;

With heart as calm as lakes that sleep,
In frosty moonlight glistening;
Or mountain rivers, where they creep
Along a channel smooth and deep,
To their own far-off murmurs listening.

1823.

TO THE LADY FLEMING

ON SEEING THE FOUNDATION PREPARING FOR THE ERECTION OF RYDAL CHAPEL, WESTMORELAND

After thanking Lady Fleming in prose for the service she had done to her neighbourhood by erecting this Chapel, I have nothing to say beyond the expression of regret that the architect did not furnish an elevation better suited to the site in a narrow mountain-pass, and, what is of more consequence, better constructed in the interior for the purposes of worship. It has no chancel; the altar is unbecomingly confined; the pews are so narrow as to preclude the possibility of kneeling with comfort; there is no vestry; and what ought to have been first mentioned, the font, instead of standing at its proper place at the entrance, is thrust into the farther end of a pew. When these defects shall be pointed out to the munificent Patroness, they will, it is hoped, be corrected.

I

Blest is this Isle—our native Land;
Where battlement and moated gate
Are objects only for the hand
Of hoary Time to decorate;
Where shady hamlet, town that breathes
Its busy smoke in social wreaths,
No rampart's stern defence require,
Nought but the heaven-directed spire,
And steeple tower (with pealing bells
Far-heard)—our only citadels.

II

O Lady! from a noble line
Of chieftains sprung, who stoutly bore
The spear, yet gave to works divine
A bounteous help in days of yore,
(As records mouldering in the Dell
Of Nightshade[1] haply yet may tell;)
Thee kindred aspirations moved
To build, within a vale beloved,
For Him upon whose high behests
All peace depends, all safety rests.

III

How fondly will the woods embrace
This daughter of thy pious care,
Lifting her front with modest grace
To make a fair recess more fair;
And to exalt the passing hour;
Or soothe it with a healing power
Drawn from the Sacrifice fulfilled,
Before this rugged soil was tilled,
Or human habitation rose
To interrupt the deep repose!

IV

Well may the villagers rejoice!
Nor heat, nor cold, nor weary ways,
Will be a hindrance to the voice
That would unite in prayer and praise;
More duly shall wild wandering Youth
Receive the curb of sacred truth,
Shall tottering Age, bent earthward, hear
The Promise, with uplifted ear;
And all shall welcome the new ray
Imparted to their sabbath-day.

V

Nor deem the Poet's hope misplaced,
His fancy cheated—that can see
A shade upon the future cast,
Of time's pathetic sanctity;
Can hear the monitory clock
Sound o'er the lake with gentle shock
At evening, when the ground beneath
Is ruffled o'er with cells of death;
Where happy generations lie,
Here tutored for eternity.

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[1] Bekangs Ghyll—or the dell of Nightshade—in which stands St. Mary's Abbey in Low Furness.

VI

Lives there a man whose sole delights
Are trivial pomp and city noise,
Hardening a heart that loathes or slights
What every natural heart enjoys?
Who never caught a noon-tide dream
From murmur of a running stream;
Could strip, for aught the prospect yields
To him, their verdure from the fields;
And take the radiance from the clouds
In which the sun his setting shrouds.

VII

A soul so pitiably forlorn,
If such do on this earth abide,
May season apathy with scorn,
May turn indifference to pride;
And still be not unblest—compared
With him who grovels, self-debarred
From all that lies within the scope
Of holy faith and christian hope;
Or, shipwrecked, kindles on the coast
False fires, that others may be lost.

VIII

Alas! that such perverted zeal
Should spread on Britain's favoured ground!
That public order, private weal,
Should e'er have felt or feared a wound
From champions of the desperate law
Which from their own blind hearts they draw;
Who tempt their reason to deny
God, whom their passions dare defy,
And boast that they alone are free
Who reach this dire extremity!

IX

But turn we from these "bold bad" men;
The way, mild Lady! that hath led
Down to their "dark opprobrious den,"
Is all too rough for Thee to tread.
Softly as morning vapours glide
Down Rydal-cove from Fairfield's side,
Should move the tenor of *his* song
Who means to charity no wrong;
Whose offering gladly would accord
With this day's work, in thought and word.

X

Heaven prosper it! may peace, and love,
And hope, and consolation, fall,
Through its meek influence, from above,
And penetrate the hearts of all;
All who, around the hallowed Fane,
Shall sojourn in this fair domain;
Grateful to Thee, while service pure,
And ancient ordinance, shall endure,
For opportunity bestowed
To kneel together, and adore their God!
1823.

ON THE SAME OCCASION

Oh! gather whencesoe'er ye safely may
The help which slackening Piety requires;
Nor deem that he perforce must go astray
Who treads upon the footmarks of his sires.

Our churches, invariably perhaps, stand east and west, but *why* is by few persons *exactly* known; nor, that the degree of deviation from *due* east often noticeable in the ancient ones was determined, in each particular case, by the point in the horizon, at which the sun rose upon the day of the saint to whom the church was dedicated. These observances of our ancestors, and the causes of them, are the subject of the following stanzas.

WHEN in the antique age of bow and spear
And feudal rapine clothed with iron mail,
Came ministers of peace, intent to rear
The Mother Church in yon sequestered vale;

Then, to her Patron Saint a previous rite
Resounded with deep swell and solemn close,
Through unremitting vigils of the night,
Till from his couch the wished-for Sun uprose.

He rose, and straight—as by divine command,
They, who had waited for that sign to trace
Their work's foundation, gave with careful hand
To the high altar its determined place;

Mindful of Him who in the Orient born
There lived, and on the cross his life resigned,

And who, from out the regions of the morn,
Issuing in pomp, shall come to judge mankind.

So taught *their* creed;—nor failed the eastern sky,
'Mid these more awful feelings, to infuse
The sweet and natural hopes that shall not die,
Long as the sun his gladsome course renews.

For us hath such prelusive vigil ceased;
Yet still we plant, like men of elder days,
Our christian altar faithful to the east,
Whence the tall window drinks the morning rays;

That obvious emblem giving to the eye
Of meek devotion, which erewhile it gave,
That symbol of the dayspring from on high,
Triumphant o'er the darkness of the grave.
1823.

"A VOLANT TRIBE OF BARDS ON EARTH ARE FOUND"

A VOLANT Tribe of Bards on earth are found,
Who, while the flattering Zephyrs round them play,
On "coignes of vantage" hang their nests of clay;
How quickly from that aëry hold unbound,
Dust for oblivion! To the solid ground
Of nature trusts the Mind that builds for aye;
Convinced that there, there only, she can lay
Secure foundations. As the year runs round,
Apart she toils within the chosen ring;
While the stars shine, or while day's purple eye
Is gently closing with the flowers of spring;
Where even the motion of an Angel's wing
Would interrupt the intense tranquillity
Of silent hills, and more than silent sky.
1823.

"NOT LOVE, NOT WAR, NOR THE TUMULTUOUS SWELL"

NOT Love, not War, nor the tumultuous swell,
Of civil conflict, nor the wrecks of change,
Nor Duty struggling with afflictions strange—
Not these *alone* inspire the tuneful shell;
But where untroubled peace and concord dwell,
There also is the Muse not loth to range,
Watching the twilight smoke of cot or grange,
Skyward ascending from a woody dell.
Meek aspirations please her, lone endeavour,
And sage content, and placid melancholy;
She loves to gaze upon a crystal river—
Diaphanous because it travels slowly;
Soft is the music that would charm for ever;
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.
1823.

TO ———

Written at Rydal Mount. On Mrs. Wordsworth.

LET other bards of angels sing,
Bright suns without a spot;
But thou art no such perfect thing:
Rejoice that thou art not!

Heed not tho' none should call thee fair;
So, Mary, let it be
If nought in loveliness compare
With what thou art to me.

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,
Whose veil is unremoved
Till heart with heart in concord beats,
And the lover is beloved.
1824.

TO ———

Written at Rydal Mount. To Mrs. W.

O DEARER far than light and life are dear,
Full oft our human foresight I deplore;
Trembling, through my unworthiness, with fear
That friends, by death disjoined, may meet no more!

Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control,
Mix with the day, and cross the hour of rest;
While all the future, for thy purer soul,
With "sober certainties" of love is blest.

That sigh of thine, not meant for human ear,
Tells that these words thy humbleness offend;
Yet bear me up—else faltering in the rear
Of a steep march: support me to the end.

Peace settles where the intellect is meek,
And Love is dutiful in thought and deed;
Through Thee communion with that Love I seek:
The faith Heaven strengthens where *he* moulds the Creed. 1824.

"HOW RICH THAT FOREHEAD'S CALM EXPANSE"

Written at Rydal Mount. Mrs. Wordsworth's impression is that the Poem was written at Coleorton: it was certainly suggested by a Print at Coleorton Hall.

How rich that forehead's calm expanse!
How bright that heaven-directed glance!
—Waft her to glory, wingèd Powers,
Ere sorrow be renewed,
And intercourse with mortal hours
Bring back a humbler mood!
So looked Cecilia when she drew
An Angel from his station;
So looked; not ceasing to pursue
Her tuneful adoration!
But hand and voice alike are still;
No sound *here* sweeps away the will
That gave it birth: in service meek
One upright arm sustains the cheek,
And one across the bosom lies—
That rose, and now forgets to rise,
Subdued by breathless harmonies
Of meditative feeling;
Mute strains from worlds beyond the skies,
Through the pure light of female eyes,
Their sanctity revealing! 1824.

TO ——

Written at Rydal Mount. Prompted by the undue importance attached to personal beauty by some dear friends of mine.

Look at the fate of summer flowers,
Which blow at daybreak, droop e'er even-song;
And, grieved for their brief date, confess that ours,
Measured by what we are and ought to be,
Measured by all that, trembling, we foresee,
Is not so long!

If human Life do pass away,
Perishing yet more swiftly than the flower,
If we are creatures of a *winter's* day;
What space hath Virgin's beauty to disclose
Her sweets, and triumph o'er the breathing rose?
Not even an hour!

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
The happiest lovers Arcady might boast,
Could not the entrance of this thought forbid:
O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted Maid!
Nor rate too high what must so quickly fade,
So soon be lost.

Then shall love teach some virtuous Youth
"To draw, out of the object of his eyes,"
The while on thee they gaze in simple truth,
Hues more exalted, "a refinèd Form,"
That dreads not age, nor suffers from the worm,
And never dies. 1824.

A FLOWER GARDEN

AT COLEORTON HALL, LEICESTERSHIRE

Planned by my friend, Lady Beaumont, in connection with the garden at Coleorton.

Tell me, ye Zephyrs! that unfold,
While fluttering o'er this gay Recess,
Pinions that fanned the teeming mould
Of Eden's blissful wilderness,
Did only softly-stealing hours
There close the peaceful lives of flowers?

Say, when the *moving* creatures saw
All kinds commingled without fear,
Prevailed a like indulgent law
For the still growths that prosper here?
Did wanton fawn and kid forbear
The half-blown rose, the lily spare?

Or peeped they often from their beds
And prematurely disappeared,
Devoured like pleasure ere it spreads
A bosom to the sun endeared?
If such their harsh untimely doom,
It falls not *here* on bud or bloom.

All summer long the happy Eve
Of this fair Spot her flowers may bind,
Nor e'er, with ruffled fancy, grieve,
From the next glance she casts, to find
That love for little things by Fate
Is rendered vain as love for great.

Yet, where the guardian fence is wound,
So subtly are our eyes beguiled
We see not nor suspect a bound,
No more than in some forest wild;
The sight is free as air—or crost
Only by art in nature lost.

And, though the jealous turf refuse
By random footsteps to be prest,
And feed on never-sullied dews,
Ye, gentle breezes from the west,
With all the ministers of hope
Are tempted to this sunny slope!

And hither throngs of birds resort;
Some, inmates lodged in shady nests,
Some, perched on stems of stately port
That nod to welcome transient guests;
While hare and leveret, seen at play,
Appear not more shut out than they.

Apt emblem (for reproof of pride)
This delicate Enclosure shows
Of modest kindness, that would hide
The firm protection she bestows;
Of manners, like its viewless fence,
Ensuring peace to innocence.

Thus spake the moral Muse—her wing
Abruptly spreading to depart,
She left that farewell offering,
Momento for some docile heart;
That may respect the good old age
When Fancy was Truth's willing Page;
And Truth would skim the flowery glade,
Though entering but as Fancy's Shade.

1824.

TO THE LADY E. B. AND THE HON. MISS P.

Composed in the Grounds of Plass Newidd, near Llangollen, 1824.

In this Vale of Meditation my friend Jones resided, having been allowed by his diocesan to fix himself there without resigning his Living in Oxfordshire. He was with my wife and daughter and me when we visited these celebrated ladies who had retired, as one may say, into notice in this vale. Their cottage lay directly in the road between London and Dublin, and they were of course visited by their Irish friends as well as innumerable strangers. They took much delight in passing jokes on our friend Jones's plumpness, ruddy cheeks, and smiling countenance, as little suited to a hermit living in the Vale of Meditation. We all thought there was ample room for retort on his part, so curious was the appearance of these ladies, so elaborately sentimental about themselves and their *Caro Albergo*, as they named it in an inscription on a tree that stood opposite, the endearing epithet being preceded by the word Ecco! calling upon the saunterer to look about him. So oddly was one of these ladies attired that we took her, at a little distance, for a Roman Catholic priest, with a crucifix and relics hung at his neck. They were without caps, their hair bushy and white as snow, which contributed to the mistake.

A STREAM, to mingle with your favourite Dee,
Along the VALE OF MEDITATION[1] flows;
So styled by those fierce Britons, pleased to see
In Nature's face the expression of repose;
Or haply there some pious hermit chose
To live and die, the peace of heaven his aim;
To whom the wild sequestered region owes
At this late day, its sanctifying name.
GLYN CAFAILLGAROCH, in the Cambrian tongue,
In ours, the VALE OF FRIENDSHIP, let *this* spot
Be named; where, faithful to a low-roofed Cot,
On Deva's banks, ye have abode so long;

---

[1] Glyn Myrvr.

Sisters in love, a love allowed to climb,
Even on this earth, above the reach of
Time!

TO THE TORRENT AT THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE, NORTH WALES, 1824

How art thou named? In search of what
strange land
From what huge height, descending? Can
such force
Of waters issue from a British source,
Or hath not Pindus fed thee, where the band
Of Patriots scoop their freedom out, with
hand
Desperate as thine? Or come the incessant shocks
From that young Stream, that smites the
throbbing rocks
Of Viamala? There I seem to stand,
As in life's morn; permitted to behold,
From the dread chasm, woods climbing
above woods,
In pomp that fades not; everlasting snows;
And skies that ne'er relinquish their repose;
Such power possess the family of floods
Over the minds of Poets, young or old!

COMPOSED AMONG THE RUINS OF A CASTLE IN NORTH WALES

THROUGH shattered galleries, 'mid roofless
halls,
Wandering with timid footsteps oft betrayed,
The Stranger sighs, nor scruples to upbraid
Old Time, though he, gentlest among the
Thralls
Of Destiny, upon these wounds hath laid
His lenient touches, soft as light that falls,
From the wan Moon, upon the towers and
walls,
Light deepening the profoundest sleep of
shade.
Relic of Kings! Wreck of forgotten wars,
To winds abandoned and the prying stars,
Time *loves* Thee! at his call the Seasons
twine
Luxuriant wreaths around thy forehead hoar;
And, though past pomp no changes can
restore,
A soothing recompence, his gift, is thine!
1824.

ELEGIAC STANZAS

ADDRESSED TO SIR G. H. B. UPON THE DEATH OF HIS SISTER-IN-LAW

On Mrs. Fermor. This lady had been a widow long before I knew her. Her husband was of the family of the lady celebrated in the "Rape of the Lock," and was, I believe, a Roman Catholic. The sorrow which his death caused her was fearful in its character as described in this poem, but was subdued in course of time by the strength of her religious faith. I have been, for many weeks at a time, an inmate with her at Coleorton Hall, as were also Mrs. Wordsworth and my Sister. The truth in the sketch of her character here given was acknowledged with gratitude by her nearest relatives. She was eloquent in conversation, energetic upon public matters, open in respect to those, but slow to communicate her personal feelings; upon these she never touched in her intercourse with me, so that I could not regard myself as her confidential friend, and was accordingly surprised when I learnt she had left me a legacy of £100, as a token of her esteem. See, in further illustration, the second stanza inscribed upon her Cenotaph in Coleorton church.

O FOR a dirge! But why complain?
Ask rather a triumphal strain
When FERMOR'S race is run;
A garland of immortal boughs
To twine around the Christian's brows,
Whose glorious work is done.

We pay a high and holy debt;
No tears of passionate regret
Shall stain this votive lay;
Ill-worthy, Beaumont! were the grief
That flings itself on wild relief
When Saints have passed away.

Sad doom, at Sorrow's shrine to kneel,
For ever covetous to feel,
And impotent to bear!
Such once was hers—to think and think
On severed love, and only sink
From anguish to despair!

But nature to its inmost part
Faith had refined; and to her heart
A peaceful cradle given:
Calm as the dew-drop's, free to rest
Within a breeze-fanned rose's breast
Till it exhales to Heaven.

Was ever Spirit that could bend
So graciously?—that could descend,
Another's need to suit,
So promptly from her lofty throne?—
In works of love, in these alone,
How restless, how minute!

Pale was her hue; yet mortal cheek
Ne'er kindled with a livelier streak
When aught had suffered wrong,—
When aught that breathes had felt a wound;
Such look the Oppressor might confound,
However proud and strong.

But hushed be every thought that springs
From out the bitterness of things;
Her quiet is secure;
No thorns can pierce her tender feet,
Whose life was, like the violet, sweet,
As climbing jasmine, pure—

As snowdrop on an infant's grave,
Or lily heaving with the wave
That feeds it and defends;
As Vesper, ere the star hath kissed
The mountain top, or breathed the mist
That from the vale ascends.

Thou takest not away, O Death!
Thou strikest—absence perisheth,
Indifference is no more;
The future brightens on our sight;
For on the past hath fallen a light
That tempts us to adore. 1824.

CENOTAPH

See "Elegiac Stanzas. Addressed to Sir G. H. B. upon the death of his Sister-in-Law."

In affectionate remembrance of Frances Fermor, whose remains are deposited in the church of Claines, near Worcester, this stone is erected by her sister, Dame Margaret, wife of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., who, feeling not less than the love of a brother for the deceased, commends this memorial to the care of his heirs and successors in the possession of this place.

By vain affections unenthralled,
Though resolute when duty called
To meet the world's broad eye,
Pure as the holiest cloistered nun
That ever feared the tempting sun,
Did Fermor live and die.
This Tablet, hallowed by her name,
One heart-relieving tear may claim;
But if the pensive gloom
Of fond regret be still thy choice,
Exalt thy spirit, hear the voice
Of Jesus from her tomb!

"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE"

1824.

EPITAPH

IN THE CHAPEL-YARD OF LANGDALE, WESTMORELAND

Owen Lloyd, the subject of this epitaph, was born at Old Brathay, near Ambleside, and was the son of Charles Lloyd and his wife Sophia (née Pemberton), both of Birmingham, who came to reside in this part of the country soon after their marriage. They had many children, both sons and daughters, of whom the most remarkable was the subject of this epitaph. He was educated under Mr. Dawes, at Ambleside, Dr. Butler, of Shrewsbury, and lastly at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he would have been greatly distinguished as a scholar but for inherited infirmities of bodily constitution, which, from early childhood, affected his mind. His love for the neighbourhood in which he was born, and his sympathy with the habits and characters of the mountain yeomanry, in conjunction with irregular spirits, that unfitted him for facing duties in situations to which he was unaccustomed, induced him to accept the retired curacy of Langdale. How much he was beloved and honoured there, and with what feelings he discharged his duty under the oppression of severe malady, is set forth, though imperfectly, in the epitaph.

By playful smiles, (alas! too oft
A sad heart's sunshine, by a soft
And gentle nature, and a free
Yet modest hand of charity,
Through life was Owen Lloyd endeared
To young and old; and how revered
Had been that pious spirit, a tide
Of humble mourners testified,
When, after pains dispensed to prove
The measure of God's chastening love,
Here, brought from far, his corse found rest,—
Fulfilment of his own request;—
Urged less for this Yew's shade, though he
Planted with such fond hope the tree;
Less for the love of stream and rock,
Dear as they were, than that his Flock,

When they no more their Pastor's voice
Could hear to guide them in their choice
Through good and evil, help might have,
Admonished, from his silent grave,
Of righteousness, of sins forgiven,
For peace on earth and bliss in heaven.
1824.

THE CONTRAST

THE PARROT AND THE WREN

The Parrot belonged to Mrs. Luff while living at Fox-Ghyll. The Wren was one that haunted for many years the summer-house between the two terraces at Rydal Mount.

I

Within her gilded cage confined,
I saw a dazzling Belle,
A Parrot of that famous kind
Whose name is Non-pareil.

Like beads of glossy jet her eyes;
And, smoothed by Nature's skill,
With pearl or gleaming agate vies
Her finely-curvèd bill.

Her plumy mantle's living hues
In mass opposed to mass,
Outshine the splendour that imbues
The robes of pictured glass.

And, sooth to say, an apter Mate
Did never tempt the choice
Of feathered Thing most delicate
In figure and in voice.

But, exiled from Australian bowers,
And singleness her lot,
She trills her song with tutored powers,
Or mocks each casual note.

No more of pity for regrets
With which she may have striven!
Now but in wantonness she frets,
Or spite, if cause be given;

Arch, volatile, a sportive bird
By social glee inspired;
Ambitious to be seen or heard,
And pleased to be admired!

II

This moss-lined shed, green, soft, and dry,
Harbours a self-contented Wren,
Not shunning man's abode, though shy,
Almost as thought itself, of human ken.

Strange places, coverts unendeared,
She never tried; the very nest
In which this Child of Spring was reared,
Is warmed, thro' winter, by her feathery breast.

To the bleak winds she sometimes gives
A slender unexpected strain;
Proof that the hermitess still lives,
Though she appear not, and be sought in vain.

Say, Dora! tell me, by yon placid moon,
If called to choose between the favoured pair,
Which would you be,—the bird of the saloon
By lady-fingers tended with nice care,
Caressed, applauded, upon dainties fed,
Or Nature's Darkling of this mossy shed?
1825.

TO A SKY-LARK

Written at Rydal Mount.

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!
1825.

"ERE WITH COLD BEADS OF MIDNIGHT DEW"

Written at Rydal Mount. Suggested by the condition of a friend.

Ere with cold beads of midnight dew
Had mingled tears of thine,
I grieved, fond Youth! that thou shouldst sue
To haughty Geraldine.

Immoveable by generous sighs,
She glories in a train
Who drag, beneath our native skies,
An oriental chain.

Pine not like them with arms across,
Forgetting in thy care
How the fast-rooted trees can toss
Their branches in mid air.

The humblest rivulet will take
Its own wild liberties;
And, every day, the imprisoned lake
Is flowing in the breeze.

Then, crouch no more on suppliant knee,
But scorn with scorn outbrave;
A Briton, even in love, should be
A subject, not a slave! 1826.

ODE

COMPOSED ON MAY MORNING

This and the following poem originated in the lines "How delicate the leafy veil," etc.—My daughter and I left Rydal Mount upon a tour through our mountains with Mr. and Mrs. Carr in the month of May 1826, and as we were going up the vale of Newlands I was struck with the appearance of the little chapel gleaming through the veil of half-opened leaves; and the feeling which was then conveyed to my mind was expressed in the stanza referred to above. As in the case of "Liberty" and "Humanity," my first intention was to write only one poem, but subsequently I broke it into two, making additions to each part so as to produce a consistent and appropriate whole.

While from the purpling east departs
The star that led the dawn,
Blithe Flora from her couch upstarts,
For May is on the lawn.
A quickening hope, a freshening glee,
Foreran the expected Power,
Whose first-drawn breath, from bush and tree,
Shakes off that pearly shower.

All Nature welcomes Her whose sway
Tempers the year's extremes;
Who scattereth lustres o'er noon-day,
Like morning's dewy gleams;
While mellow warble, sprightly trill,
The tremulous heart excite;
And hums the balmy air to still
The balance of delight.

Time was, blest Power! when youths and maids
At peep of dawn would rise,
And wander forth, in forest glades
Thy birth to solemnize.
Though mute the song—to grace the rite
Untouched the hawthorn bough,
Thy Spirit triumphs o'er the slight;
Man changes, but not Thou!

Thy feathered Lieges bill and wings
In love's disport employ;
Warmed by thy influence, creeping things
Awake to silent joy:
Queen art thou still for each gay plant
Where the slim wild deer roves;
And served in depths where fishes haunt
Their own mysterious groves.

Cloud-piercing peak, and trackless heath,
Instinctive homage pay;
Nor wants the dim-lit cave a wreath
To honour thee, sweet May!
Where cities fanned by thy brisk airs
Behold a smokeless sky,
Their puniest flower-pot-nursling dares
To open a bright eye.

And if, on this thy natal morn,
The pole, from which thy name
Hath not departed, stands forlorn
Of song and dance and game;
Still from the village-green a vow
Aspires to thee addrest,
Wherever peace is on the brow,
Or love within the breast.

Yes! where Love nestles thou canst teach
The soul to love the more;

Hearts also shall thy lessons reach
That never loved before.
Stript is the haughty one of pride,
The bashful freed from fear,
While rising, like the ocean-tide,
In flows the joyous year.

Hush, feeble lyre! weak words refuse
The service to prolong!
To yon exulting thrush the Muse
Entrusts the imperfect song;
His voice shall chant, in accents clear,
Throughout the live-long day,
Till the first silver star appear,
The sovereignty of May. 1826.

TO MAY

Though many suns have risen and set
Since thou, blithe May, wert born,
And Bards, who hailed thee, may forget
Thy gifts, thy beauty scorn;
There are who to a birthday strain
Confine not harp and voice,
But evermore throughout thy reign
Are grateful and rejoice!

Delicious odours! music sweet,
Too sweet to pass away!
Oh for a deathless song to meet
The soul's desire—a lay
That, when a thousand years are told,
Should praise thee, genial Power!
Through summer heat, autumnal cold,
And winter's dreariest hour.

Earth, sea, thy presence feel—nor less,
If yon ethereal blue
With its soft smile the truth express,
The heavens have felt it too.
The inmost heart of man if glad
Partakes a livelier cheer;
And eyes that cannot but be sad
Let fall a brightened tear.

Since thy return, through days and weeks
Of hope that grew by stealth,
How many wan and faded cheeks
Have kindled into health!
The Old, by thee revived, have said,
"Another year is ours;"
And wayworn Wanderers, poorly fed
Have smiled upon thy flowers.

Who tripping lisps a merry song
Amid his playful peers?
The tender Infant who was long
A prisoner of fond fears;
But now, when every sharp-edged blast
Is quiet in its sheath,
His Mother leaves him free to taste
Earth's sweetness in thy breath.

Thy help is with the weed that creeps
Along the humblest ground;
No cliff so bare but on its steeps
Thy favours may be found;
But most on some peculiar nook
That our own hands have drest,
Thou and thy train are proud to look,
And seem to love it best.

And yet how pleased we wander forth
When May is whispering, "Come!
"Choose from the bowers of virgin earth
"The happiest for your home;
"Heaven's bounteous love through me is spread
"From sunshine, clouds, winds, waves,
"Drops on the mouldering turret's head,
"And on your turf-clad graves!"

Such greeting heard, away with sighs
For lilies that must fade,
Or "the rathe primrose as it dies
Forsaken" in the shade!
Vernal fruitions and desires
Are linked in endless chase;
While, as one kindly growth retires,
Another takes its place.

And what if thou, sweet May, hast known
Mishap by worm and blight;
If expectations newly blown
Have perished in thy sight;
If loves and joys, while up they sprung,
Were caught as in a snare;
Such is the lot of all the young,
However bright and fair.

Lo! Streams that April could not check
Are patient of thy rule;
Gurgling in foamy water-break,
Loitering in glassy pool:
By thee, thee only, could be sent
Such gentle mists as glide,
Curling with unconfirmed intent,
On that green mountain's side.

How delicate the leafy veil
  Through which yon house of God
Gleams, mid the peace of this deep dale
  By few but shepherds trod!
And lowly huts, near beaten ways,
  No sooner stand attired
In thy fresh wreaths, than they for praise
  Peep forth, and are admired.

Season of fancy and of hope,
  Permit not for one hour,
A blossom from thy crown to drop,
  Nor add to it a flower!
Keep, lovely May, as if by touch
  Of self-restraining art,
This modest charm of not too much,
  Part seen, imagined part!

1826-1834.

"ONCE I COULD HAIL (HOWE'ER SERENE THE SKY)"

"No faculty yet given me to espy
  The dusky Shape within her arms imbound."

Afterwards, when I could not avoid seeing it, I wondered at this, and the more so because, like most children, I had been in the habit of watching the moon through all her changes, and had often continued to gaze at it when at the full, till half blinded.

> "Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone
> Wi' the auld moone in hir arme."
>
> *Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,*
> *Percy's Reliques.*

Once I could hail (howe'er serene the sky)
The Moon re-entering her monthly round,
No faculty yet given me to espy
The dusky Shape within her arms imbound,
That thin memento of effulgence lost
Which some have named her Predecessor's ghost.

Young, like the Crescent that above me shone,
Nought I perceived within it dull or dim;
All that appeared was suitable to One
Whose fancy had a thousand fields to skim;
To expectations spreading with wild growth,
And hope that kept with me her plighted troth.

I saw (ambition quickening at the view)
A silver boat launched on a boundless flood;
A pearly crest, like Dian's when it threw
Its brightest splendour round a leafy wood;
But not a hint from under-ground, no sign
Fit for the glimmering brow of Proserpine.

Or was it Dian's self that seemed to move
Before me?—nothing blemished the fair sight;
On her I looked whom jocund Fairies love,
Cynthia, who puts the *little* stars to flight,
And by that thinning magnifies the great,
For exaltation of her sovereign state.

And when I learned to mark the spectral Shape
As each new Moon obeyed the call of Time,
If gloom fell on me, swift was my escape;
Such happy privilege hath life's gay Prime,
To see or not to see, as best may please
A buoyant Spirit, and a heart at ease.

Now, dazzling Stranger! when thou meet'st my glance,
Thy dark Associate ever I discern;
Emblem of thoughts too eager to advance
While I salute my joys, thoughts sad or stern;
Shades of past bliss, or phantoms that, to gain
Their fill of promised lustre, wait in vain.

So changes mortal Life with fleeting years;
A mournful change, should Reason fail to bring
The timely insight that can temper fears,
And from vicissitude remove its sting;
While Faith aspires to seats in that domain
Where joys are perfect—neither wax nor wane.

1826.

"THE MASSY WAYS, CARRIED ACROSS THESE HEIGHTS"

The walk is what we call the *Far-terrace*, beyond the summer-house at Rydal Mount. The lines were written when we were afraid of being obliged to quit the place to which we were so much attached.

The massy Ways, carried across these heights

By Roman perseverance, are destroyed,
Or hidden under ground, like sleeping worms.
How venture then to hope that Time will spare
This humble Walk? Yet on the mountain's side
A POET'S hand first shaped it; and the steps
Of that same Bard—repeated to and fro
At morn, at noon, and under moonlight skies
Through the vicissitudes of many a year—
Forbade the weeds to creep o'er its grey line.
No longer, scattering to the heedless winds
The vocal raptures of fresh poesy,
Shall he frequent these precincts; locked no more
In earnest converse with belovèd Friends,
Here will he gather stores of ready bliss,
As from the beds and borders of a garden
Choice flowers are gathered! But, if Power may spring
Out of a farewell yearning—favoured more
Than kindred wishes mated suitably
With vain regrets—the Exile would consign
This Walk, his loved possession, to the care
Of those pure Minds that reverence the Muse.
1826.

THE PILLAR OF TRAJAN

These verses perhaps had better be transferred to the class of "Italian Poems." I had observed in the Newspaper, that the Pillar of Trajan was given as a subject for a prize-poem in English verse. I had a wish perhaps that my son, who was then an undergraduate at Oxford, should try his fortune, and I told him so; but he, not having been accustomed to write verse, wisely declined to enter on the task; whereupon I showed him these lines as a proof of what might, without difficulty, be done on such a subject.

WHERE towers are crushed, and unforbidden weeds
O'er mutilated arches shed their seeds;
And temples, doomed to milder change, unfold
A new magnificence that vies with old;
Firm in its pristine majesty hath stood
A votive Column, spared by fire and flood:—
And, though the passions of man's fretful race
Have never ceased to eddy round its base,
Not injured more by touch of meddling hands
Than a lone obelisk, 'mid Nubian sands,
Or aught in Syrian deserts left to save
From death the memory of the good and brave.
Historic figures round the shaft embost
Ascend, with lineaments in air not lost:
Still as he turns, the charmed spectator sees
Group winding after group with dream-like ease;
Triumphs in sunbright gratitude displayed,
Or softly stealing into modest shade.
—So, pleased with purple clusters to entwine
Some lofty elm-tree, mounts the daring vine;
The woodbine so, with spiral grace, and breathes
Wide-spreading odours from her flowery wreaths.
  Borne by the Muse from rills in shepherds' ears
Murmuring but one smooth story for all years,
I gladly commune with the mind and heart
Of him who thus survives by classic art,
His actions witness, venerate his mien,
And study Trajan as by Pliny seen;
Behold how fought the Chief whose conquering sword
Stretched far as earth might own a single lord;
In the delight of moral prudence schooled,
How feelingly at home the Sovereign ruled;
Best of the good—in pagan faith allied
To more than Man, by virtue deified.
  Memorial Pillar! 'mid the wrecks of Time
Preserve thy charge with confidence sublime—
The exultations, pomps, and cares of Rome,
Whence half the breathing world received its doom;

Things that recoil from language; that, if shown
By apter pencil, from the light had flown.
A Pontiff, Trajan *here* the Gods implores,
There greets an Embassy from Indian shores;
Lo! he harangues his cohorts—*there* the storm
Of battle meets him in authentic form!
Unharnessed, naked, troops of Moorish horse
Sweep to the charge; more high, the Dacian force,
To hoof and finger mailed;[1]—yet, high or low,
None bleed, and none lie prostrate but the foe;
In every Roman, through all turns of fate,
Is Roman dignity inviolate;
Spirit in him pre-eminent, who guides,
Supports, adorns, and over all presides;
Distinguished only by inherent state
From honoured Instruments that round him wait;
Rise as he may, his grandeur scorns the test
Of outward symbol, nor will deign to rest
On aught by which another is deprest.
—Alas! that One thus disciplined could toil
To enslave whole nations on their native soil;
So emulous of Macedonian fame,
That, when his age was measured with his aim,
He drooped, 'mid else unclouded victories,
And turned his eagles back with deep-drawn sighs:
O weakness of the Great! O folly of the Wise!
  Where now the haughty Empire that was spread
With such fond hope? her very speech is dead;
Yet glorious Art the power of Time defies,
And Trajan still, through various enterprise,
Mounts, in this fine illusion, toward the skies:
Still are we present with the imperial Chief,
Nor cease to gaze upon the bold Relief
Till Rome, to silent marble unconfined,
Becomes with all her years a vision of the Mind.
1826.

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[1] See Note.

ON SEEING A NEEDLECASE IN THE FORM OF A HARP

THE WORK OF E. M. S.

FROWNS are on every Muse's face,
  Reproaches from their lips are sent,
That mimicry should thus disgrace
  The noble Instrument.

A very Harp in all but size!
  Needles for strings in apt gradation!
Minerva's self would stigmatize
  The unclassic profanation.

Even her *own* needle that subdued
  Arachne's rival spirit,
Though wrought in Vulcan's happiest mood,
  Such honour could not merit.

And this, too, from the Laureate's Child,
  A living lord of melody!
How will her Sire be reconciled
  To the refined indignity?

I spake, when whispered a low voice,
  "Bard! moderate your ire;
Spirits of all degrees rejoice
  In presence of the lyre.

The Minstrels of Pygmean bands,
  Dwarf Genii, moonlight-loving Fays,
Have shells to fit their tiny hands
  And suit their slender lays.

Some, still more delicate of ear,
  Have lutes (believe my words)
Whose framework is of gossamer,
  While sunbeams are the chords.

Gay Sylphs this miniature will court,
  Made vocal by their brushing wings,
And sullen Gnomes will learn to sport
  Around its polished strings;

Whence strains to love-sick maiden dear,
  While in her lonely bower she tries
To cheat the thought she cannot cheer,
  By fanciful embroideries.

Trust, angry Bard! a knowing Sprite,
  Nor think the Harp her lot deplores!
Though 'mid the stars the Lyre shine bright,
  Love *stoops* as fondly as he soars."
1827.

TO ——

In the cottage, Town-end, Grasmere, one afternoon in 1801, my sister read to me the Sonnets of Milton. I had long been well acquainted with them, but I was particularly struck on that occasion by the dignified simplicity and majestic harmony that runs through most of them,—in character so totally different from the Italian, and still more so from Shakspeare's fine Sonnets. I took fire, if I may be allowed to say so, and produced three Sonnets the same afternoon, the first I ever wrote except an irregular one at school. Of these three, the only one I distinctly remember is "I grieved for Buonaparté." One was never written down: the third, which was, I believe, preserved, I cannot particularise.

HAPPY the feeling from the bosom thrown
In perfect shape (whose beauty Time shall spare
Though a breath made it) like a bubble blown
For summer pastime into wanton air;
Happy the thought best likened to a stone
Of the sea-beach, when, polished with nice care,
Veins it discovers exquisite and rare,
Which for the loss of that moist gleam atone
That tempted first to gather it. That here,
O chief of Friends! such feelings I present,
To thy regard, with thoughts so fortunate,
Were a vain notion; but the hope is dear,
That thou, if not with partial joy elate,
Wilt smile upon this gift with more than mild content![1]
1827.

"HER ONLY PILOT THE SOFT BREEZE"

HER only pilot the soft breeze, the boat
Lingers, but Fancy is well satisfied;
With keen-eyed Hope, with Memory, at her side,
And the glad Muse at liberty to note
All that to each is precious, as we float
Gently along; regardless who shall chide
If the heavens smile, and leave us free to glide,
Happy Associates breathing air remote
From trivial cares. But, Fancy and the Muse,
Why have I crowded this small bark with you
And others of your kind, ideal crew!
While here sits One whose brightness owes its hues
To flesh and blood; no Goddess from above,
No fleeting Spirit, but my own true love?
1827.

"WHY, MINSTREL, THESE UNTUNEFUL MURMURINGS"

"WHY, Minstrel, these untuneful murmurings—
Dull, flagging notes that with each other jar?"
"Think, gentle Lady, of a Harp so far
From its own country, and forgive the strings."
A simple answer! but even so forth springs,
From the Castalian fountain of the heart,
The Poetry of Life, and all *that* Art
Divine of words quickening insensate things.
From the submissive necks of guiltless men
Stretched on the block, the glittering axe recoils;
Sun, moon, and stars, all struggle in the toils
Of mortal sympathy; what wonder then
That the poor Harp distempered music yields
To its sad Lord, far from his native fields?
1827.

TO S. H.

EXCUSE is needless when with love sincere
Of occupation, not by fashion led,
Thou turn'st the Wheel that slept with dust o'erspread;
My nerves from no such murmur shrink,—tho' near,
Soft as the Dorhawk's to a distant ear,
When twilight shades darken the mountain's head.
Even She who toils to spin our vital thread
Might smile on work, O Lady, once so dear
To household virtues. Venerable Art,
Torn from the Poor! yet shall kind Heaven protect
Its own; though Rulers, with undue respect,
Trusting to crowded factory and mart
And proud discoveries of the intellect,
Heed not the pillage of man's ancient heart.
1827.

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[1] See Note.

DECAY OF PIETY

Attendance at church on prayer-days, Wednesdays and Fridays and Holidays, received a shock at the Revolution. It is now, however, happily reviving. The ancient people described in this Sonnet were among the last of that pious class. May we hope that the practice, now in some degree renewed, will continue to spread.

OFT have I seen, ere Time had ploughed my cheek,
Matrons and Sires—who, punctual to the call
Of their loved Church, on fast or festival
Through the long year the house of Prayer would seek:
By Christmas snows, by visitation bleak
Of Easter winds, unscared, from hut or hall
They came to lowly bench or sculptured stall,
But with one fervour of devotion meek.
I see the places where they once were known,
And ask, surrounded even by kneeling crowds,
Is ancient Piety for ever flown?
Alas! even then they seemed like fleecy clouds
That, struggling through the western sky, have won
Their pensive light from a departed sun!
1827.

"SCORN NOT THE SONNET"

Composed, almost extempore, in a short walk on the western side of Rydal Lake.

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!
1827.

"FAIR PRIME OF LIFE! WERE IT ENOUGH TO GILD"

Suggested by observation of the way in which a young friend, whom I do not choose to name, misspent his time and misapplied his talents. He took afterwards a better course, and became a useful member of society, respected, I believe, wherever he has been known.

FAIR Prime of life! were it enough to gild
With ready sunbeams every straggling shower;
And, if an unexpected cloud should lower,
Swiftly thereon a rainbow arch to build
For Fancy's errands,—then, from fields half-tilled
Gathering green weeds to mix with poppy flower,
Thee might thy Minions crown, and chant thy power,
Unpitied by the wise, all censure stilled.
Ah! show that worthier honours are thy due;
Fair Prime of life! arouse the deeper heart;
Confirm the Spirit glorying to pursue
Some path of steep ascent and lofty aim;
And, if there be a joy that slights the claim
Of grateful memory, bid that joy depart.
1827.

RETIREMENT

IF the whole weight of what we think and feel,
Save only far as thought and feeling blend
With action, were as nothing, patriot Friend!
From thy remonstrance would be no appeal;
But to promote and fortify the weal
Of our own Being is her paramount end;
A truth which they alone shall comprehend
Who shun the mischief which they cannot heal.
Peace in these feverish times is sovereign bliss:
Here, with no thirst but what the stream can slake,
And startled only by the rustling brake,
Cool air I breathe; while the unincumbered Mind
By some weak aims at services assigned
To gentle Natures, thanks not Heaven amiss.
1827.

"THERE IS A PLEASURE IN POETIC PAINS"

There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only Poets know;—'twas rightly said;
Whom could the Muses else allure to tread
Their smoothest paths, to wear their lightest chains?
When happiest Fancy has inspired the strains,
How oft the malice of one luckless word
Pursues the Enthusiast to the social board,
Haunts him belated on the silent plains!
Yet he repines not, if his thought stand clear,
At last, of hindrance and obscurity,
Fresh as the star that crowns the brow of morn;
Bright, speckless, as a softly-moulded tear
The moment it has left the virgin's eye,
Or rain-drop lingering on the pointed thorn. 1827.

RECOLLECTION OF THE PORTRAIT OF KING HENRY EIGHTH, TRINITY LODGE, CAMBRIDGE

The imperial Stature, the colossal stride,
Are yet before me; yet do I behold
The broad full visage, chest of amplest mould,
The vestments 'broidered with barbaric pride:
And lo! a poniard, at the Monarch's side,
Hangs ready to be grasped in sympathy
With the keen threatenings of that fulgent eye,
Below the white-rimmed bonnet, far-descried.
Who trembles now at thy capricious mood?
'Mid those surrounding Worthies, haughty King,
We rather think, with grateful mind sedate,
How Providence educeth, from the spring
Of lawless will, unlooked-for streams of good,
Which neither force shall check nor time abate! 1827.

"WHEN PHILOCTETES IN THE LEMNIAN ISLE"

When Philoctetes in the Lemnian isle
Like a form sculptured on a monument
Lay couched; on him or his dread bow unbent
Some wild Bird oft might settle and beguile
The rigid features of a transient smile,
Disperse the tear, or to the sigh give vent,
Slackening the pains of ruthless banishment
From his loved home, and from heroic toil.
And trust that spiritual Creatures round us move,
Griefs to allay which Reason cannot heal;
Yea, veriest reptiles have sufficed to prove
To fettered wretchedness, that no Bastile
Is deep enough to exclude the light of love,
Though man for brother man has ceased to feel. 1827.

"WHILE ANNA'S PEERS AND EARLY PLAYMATES TREAD"

This is taken from the account given by Miss Jewsbury of the pleasure she derived, when long confined to her bed by sickness, from the inanimate object on which this Sonnet turns.

While Anna's peers and early playmates tread,
In freedom, mountain-turf and river's marge;
Or float with music in the festal barge;
Rein the proud steed, or through the dance are led;
Her doom it is to press a weary bed—
Till oft her guardian Angel, to some charge
More urgent called, will stretch his wings at large,
And friends too rarely prop the languid head.
Yet, helped by Genius—untired comforter,
The presence even of a stuffed Owl for her
Can cheat the time; sending her fancy out
To ivied castles and to moonlight skies,
Though he can neither stir a plume, nor shout;
Nor veil, with restless film, his staring eyes.
1827.

TO THE CUCKOO

Not the whole warbling grove in concert heard

When sunshine follows shower, the breast can thrill
Like the first summons, Cuckoo! of thy bill,
With its twin notes inseparably paired.
The captive 'mid damp vaults unsunned, unaired,
Measuring the periods of his lonely doom,
That cry can reach; and to the sick man's room
Sends gladness, by no languid smile declared.
The lordly eagle-race through hostile search
May perish; time may come when never more
The wilderness shall hear the lion roar;
But, long as cock shall crow from household perch
To rouse the dawn, soft gales shall speed thy wing,
And thy erratic voice be faithful to the Spring!
1827.

THE INFANT M—— M——

The infant was Mary Monkhouse, the only daughter of my friend and cousin Thomas Monkhouse.

UNQUIET Childhood here by special grace
Forgets her nature, opening like a flower
That neither feeds nor wastes its vital power
In painful struggles. Months each other chase,
And nought untunes that Infant's voice; no trace
Of fretful temper sullies her pure cheek;
Prompt, lively, self-sufficing, yet so meek
That one enrapt with gazing on her face
(Which even the placid innocence of death
Could scarcely make more placid, heaven more bright)
Might learn to picture, for the eye of faith,
The Virgin, as she shone with kindred light;
A nursling couched upon her mother's knee,
Beneath some shady palm of Galilee.
1827.

TO ROTHA Q——

Rotha, the daughter of my son-in-law Mr. Quillinan.

ROTHA, my Spiritual Child! this head was grey
When at the sacred font for thee I stood;
Pledged till thou reach the verge of womanhood,
And shalt become thy own sufficient stay:
Too late, I feel, sweet Orphan! was the day
For stedfast hope the contract to fulfil;
Yet shall my blessing hover o'er thee still,
Embodied in the music of this Lay,
Breathed forth beside the peaceful mountain Stream[1]
Whose murmur soothed thy languid Mother's ear
After her throes, this Stream of name more dear
Since thou dost bear it,—a memorial theme
For others; for thy future self, a spell
To summon fancies out of Time's dark cell.
1827.

TO ——, IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR

Lady Fitzgerald, as described to me by Lady Beaumont.

SUCH age how beautiful! O Lady bright,
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
By favouring Nature and a saintly Mind
To something purer and more exquisite
Than flesh and blood; whene'er thou meet'st my sight,
When I behold thy blanched unwithered cheek,
Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,
And head that droops because the soul is meek,
Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare;
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb
From desolation toward the genial prime;
Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
And filling more and more with crystal light
As pensive Evening deepens into night.
1827.

"IN MY MIND'S EYE A TEMPLE, LIKE A CLOUD"

IN my mind's eye a Temple, like a cloud
Slowly surmounting some invidious hill,

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[1] The river Rotha, that flows into Windermere from the lakes of Grasmere and Rydal.

Rose out of darkness: the bright Work stood still:
And might of its own beauty have been proud,
But it was fashioned and to God was vowed
By Virtues that diffused, in every part,
Spirit divine through forms of human art:
Faith had her arch—her arch, when winds blow loud,
Into the consciousness of safety thrilled;
And Love her towers of dread foundation laid
Under the grave of things; Hope had her spire
Star-high, and pointing still to something higher
Trembling I gazed, but heard a voice—it said,
"Hell-gates are powerless Phantoms when *we* build." 1827.

"GO BACK TO ANTIQUE AGES, IF THINE EYES"

Go back to antique ages, if thine eyes
The genuine mien and character would trace
Of the rash Spirit that still holds her place,
Prompting the world's audacious vanities!
Go back, and see the Tower of Babel rise;
The pyramid extend its monstrous base,
For some Aspirant of our short-lived race,
Anxious an aery name to immortalize.
There, too, ere wiles and politic dispute
Gave specious colouring to aim and act,
See the first mighty Hunter leave the brute—
To chase mankind, with men in armies packed
For his field-pastime high and absolute,
While, to dislodge his game, cities are sacked! 1827.

IN THE WOODS OF RYDAL

WILD Redbreast! hadst thou at Jemima's lip
Pecked, as at mine, thus boldly, Love might say,
A half-blown rose had tempted thee to sip
Its glistening dews; but hallowed is the clay
Which the Muse warms; and I, whose head is grey,
Am not unworthy of thy fellowship;
Nor could I let one thought—one notion—slip
That might thy sylvan confidence betray.
For are we not all His without whose care
Vouchsafed no sparrow falleth to the ground?
Who gives his Angels wings to speed through air,
And rolls the planets through the blue profound;
Then peck or perch, fond Flutterer! nor forbear
To trust a Poet in still musings bound.[1]
1827.

CONCLUSION

TO ——

IF these brief Records, by the Muses' art
Produced as lonely Nature or the strife
That animates the scenes of public life[2]
Inspired, may in thy leisure claim a part;
And if these Transcripts of the private heart
Have gained a sanction from thy falling tears;
Then I repent not. But my soul hath fears
Breathed from eternity; for, as a dart
Cleaves the blank air, Life flies: now every day
Is but a glimmering spoke in the swift wheel
Of the revolving week. Away, away,
All fitful cares, all transitory zeal!
So timely Grace the immortal wing may heal,
And honour rest upon the senseless clay.
1827.

A MORNING EXERCISE

Written at Rydal Mount. I could wish the last five stanzas of this to be read with the poem addressed to the skylark.

FANCY, who leads the pastimes of the glad,
Full oft is pleased a wayward dart to throw;
Sending sad shadows after things not sad,
Peopling the harmless fields with signs of woe:
Beneath her sway, a simple forest cry
Becomes an echo of man's misery.

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[1] See Note.

[2] This line alludes to Sonnets which will be found in another Class.

Blithe ravens croak of death; and when the owl
Tries his two voices for a favourite strain—
Tu-whit—Tu-whoo! the unsuspecting fowl
Forebodes mishap or seems but to complain;
Fancy, intent to harass and annoy,
Can thus pervert the evidence of joy.

Through border wilds where naked Indians stray,
Myriads of notes attest her subtle skill;
A feathered task-master cries, "WORK AWAY!"
And, in thy iteration, "WHIP POOR WILL!"[1]
Is heard the spirit of a toil-worn slave,
Lashed out of life, not quiet in the grave.

What wonder? at her bidding, ancient lays
Steeped in dire grief the voice of Philomel;
And that fleet messenger of summer days,
The Swallow, twittered subject to like spell;
But ne'er could Fancy bend the buoyant Lark
To melancholy service—hark! O hark!

The daisy sleeps upon the dewy lawn,
Not lifting yet the head that evening bowed;
But *He* is risen, a later star of dawn,
Glittering and twinkling near yon rosy cloud;
Bright gem instinct with music, vocal spark;
The happiest bird that sprang out of the Ark!

Hail, blest above all kinds!—Supremely skilled
Restless with fixed to balance, high with low,
Thou leav'st the halcyon free her hopes to build
On such forbearance as the deep may show;
Perpetual flight, unchecked by earthly ties,
Leav'st to the wandering bird of paradise.

Faithful, though swift as lightning, the meek dove;
Yet more hath Nature reconciled in thee;
So constant with thy downward eye of love,
Yet, in aërial singleness, so free;
So humble, yet so ready to rejoice
In power of wing and never-wearied voice.

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler!—that love-prompted strain,
('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

How would it please old Ocean to partake,
With sailors longing for a breeze in vain,
The harmony thy notes most gladly make
Where earth resembles most his own domain!
Urania's self might welcome with pleased ear
These matins mounting towards her native sphere.

Chanter by heaven attracted, whom no bars
To day-light known deter from that pursuit,
'Tis well that some sage instinct, when the stars
Come forth at evening, keeps Thee still and mute;
For not an eyelid could to sleep incline
Wert thou among them, singing as they shine!

1828.

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[1] See Waterton's *Wanderings in South America.*

THE TRIAD

Written at Rydal Mount. The Girls, Edith Southey, my daughter Dora, and Sara Coleridge.

SHOW me the noblest Youth of present time,
Whose trembling fancy would to love give birth;
Some God or Hero, from the Olympian clime
Returned, to seek a Consort upon earth;
Or, in no doubtful prospect, let me see
The brightest star of ages yet to be,
And I will mate and match him blissfully.
I will not fetch a Naiad from a flood
Pure as herself—(song lacks not mightier power)
Nor leaf-crowned Dryad from a pathless wood,
Nor Sea-nymph glistening from her coral bower;
Mere Mortals bodied forth in vision still,
Shall with Mount Ida's triple lustre fill
The chaster coverts of a British hill.
"Appear!—obey my lyre's command!
Come, like the Graces, hand in hand!
For ye, though not by birth allied,
Are Sisters in the bond of love;

Nor shall the tongue of envious pride
Presume those interweavings to reprove!
In you, which that fair progeny of Jove,
Learned from the tuneful spheres that glide
In endless union, earth and sea above."
—I sing in vain;—the pines have hushed their waving:
A peerless Youth expectant at my side,
Breathless as they, with unabated craving
Looks to the earth, and to the vacant air;
And, with a wandering eye that seems to chide,
Asks of the clouds what occupants they hide:—
But why solicit more than sight could bear,
By casting on a moment all we dare?
Invoke we those bright Beings one by one;
And what was boldly promised, truly shall be done.
"Fear not a constraining measure!
—Yielding to this gentle spell,
Lucida! from domes of pleasure,
Or from cottage-sprinkled dell,
Come to regions solitary,
Where the eagle builds her aery,
Above the hermit's long-forsaken cell!"
—She comes!—behold
That Figure, like a ship with snow-white sail!
Nearer she draws; a breeze uplifts her veil;
Upon her coming wait
As pure a sunshine and as soft a gale
As e'er, on herbage covering earthly mould,
Tempted the bird of Juno to unfold
His richest splendour—when his veering gait
And every motion of his starry train
Seem governed by a strain
Of music, audible to him alone.
"O Lady, worthy of earth's proudest throne!
Nor less, by excellence of nature, fit
Beside an unambitious hearth to sit
Domestic queen, where grandeur is unknown;
What living man could fear
The worst of Fortune's malice, wert Thou near,
Humbling that lily-stem, thy sceptre meek,
That its fair flowers may from his cheek
Brush the too happy tear?
——Queen, and handmaid lowly!
Whose skill can speed the day with lively cares,
And banish melancholy
By all that mind invents or hand prepares;
O Thou, against whose lip, without its smile
And in its silence even, no heart is proof;
Whose goodness, sinking deep, would reconcile
The softest Nursling of a gorgeous palace
To the bare life beneath the hawthorn-roof
Of Sherwood's Archer, or in caves of Wallace—
Who that hath seen thy beauty could content
His soul with but a *glimpse* of heavenly day?
Who that hath loved thee, but would lay
His strong hand on the wind, if it were bent
To take thee in thy majesty away?
Pass onward (even the glancing deer
Till we depart intrude not here;)
That mossy slope, o'er which the woodbine throws
A canopy, is smoothed for thy repose!"
—Glad moment is it when the throng
Of warblers in full concert strong
Strive, and not vainly strive, to rout
The lagging shower, and force coy Phœbus out,
Met by the rainbow's form divine,
Issuing from her cloudy shrine;—
So may the thrillings of the lyre
Prevail to further our desire,
While to these shades a sister Nymph I call.
"Come, if the notes thine ear may pierce,
Come, youngest of the lovely Three,
Submissive to the might of verse
And the dear voice of harmony,
By none more deeply felt than Thee!"
—I sang; and lo! from pastimes virginal
She hastens to the tents
Of nature, and the lonely elements.
Air sparkles round her with a dazzling sheen;
But mark her glowing cheek, her vesture green!
And, as if wishful to disarm
Or to repay the potent Charm,
She bears the stringèd lute of old romance,
That cheered the trellised arbour's privacy,
And soothed war-wearied knights in raftered hall.

How vivid, yet how delicate, her glee!
So tripped the Muse, inventress of the dance;
So, truant in waste woods, the blithe Euphrosyne!
But the ringlets of that head
Why are they ungarlanded?
Why bedeck her temples less
Than the simplest shepherdess?
Is it not a brow inviting
Choicest flowers that ever breathed,
Which the myrtle would delight in
With Idalian rose enwreathed?
But her humility is well content
With *one* wild floweret (call it not forlorn)
FLOWER OF THE WINDS, beneath her bosom worn—
Yet more for love than ornament.
Open, ye thickets! let her fly,
Swift as a Thracian Nymph o'er field and height!
For She, to all but those who love her, shy,
Would gladly vanish from a Stranger's sight;
Though where she is beloved and loves,
Light as the wheeling butterfly she moves;
Her happy spirit as a bird is free,
That rifles blossoms on a tree,
Turning them inside out with arch audacity.
Alas! how little can a moment show
Of an eye where feeling plays
In ten thousand dewy rays;
A face o'er which a thousand shadows go!
—She stops—is fastened to that rivulet's side;
And there (while, with sedater mien,
O'er timid waters that have scarcely left
Their birthplace in the rocky cleft
She bends) at leisure may be seen
Features to old ideal grace allied,
Amid their smiles and dimples dignified—
Fit countenance for the soul of primal truth;
The bland composure of eternal youth!
What more changeful than the sea?
But over his great tides
Fidelity presides;
And this light-hearted Maiden constant is as he.
High is her aim as heaven above,
And wide as ether her good-will;
And, like the lowly reed, her love
Can drink its nurture from the scantiest rill:
Insight as keen as frosty star
Is to *her* charity no bar,
Nor interrupts her frolic graces
When she is, far from these wild places,
Encircled by familiar faces.
O the charm that manners draw,
Nature, from thy genuine law!
If from what her hand would do,
Her voice would utter, aught ensue
Untoward or unfit;
She, in benign affections pure,
In self-forgetfulness secure,
Sheds round the transient harm or vague mischance
A light unknown to tutored elegance:
Her's is not a cheek shame-stricken,
But her blushes are joy-flushes;
And the fault (if fault it be)
Only ministers to quicken
Laughter-loving gaiety,
And kindle sportive wit—
Leaving this Daughter of the mountains free
As if she knew that Oberon king of Faery
Had crossed her purpose with some quaint vagary,
And heard his viewless bands
Over their mirthful triumph clapping hands.
"Last of the Three, though eldest born,
Reveal thyself, like pensive Morn
Touched by the skylark's earliest note,
Ere humbler gladness be afloat.
But whether in the semblance drest
Of Dawn—or Eve, fair vision of the west,
Come with each anxious hope subdued
By woman's gentle fortitude,
Each grief, through meekness, settling into rest.
—Or I would hail thee when some high-wrought page
Of a closed volume lingering in thy hand
Has raised thy spirit to a peaceful stand
Among the glories of a happier age."
Her brow hath opened on me—see it there,
Brightening the umbrage of her hair;
So gleams the crescent moon, that loves
To be descried through shady groves.
Tenderest bloom is on her cheek;
Wish not for a richer streak;
Nor dread the depth of meditative eye;
But let thy love, upon that azure field
Of thoughtfulness and beauty, yield
Its homage offered up in purity.
What would'st thou more? In sunny glade,

Or under leaves of thickest shade,
Was such a stillness e'er diffused
Since earth grew calm while angels mused?
Softly she treads, as if her foot were loth
To crush the mountain dew-drops—soon to melt
On the flower's breast; as if she felt
That flowers themselves, whate'er their hue,
With all their fragrance, all their glistening,
Call to the heart for inward listening—
And though for bridal wreaths and tokens true
Welcomed wisely; though a growth
Which the careless shepherd sleeps on,
As fitly spring from turf the mourner weeps on—
And without wrong are cropped the marble tomb to strew.
The Charm is over; the mute Phantoms gone,
Nor will return—but droop not, favoured Youth;
The apparition that before thee shone
Obeyed a summons covetous of truth.
From these wild rocks thy footsteps I will guide
To bowers in which thy fortune may be tried,
And one of the bright Three become thy happy Bride. 1828.

THE WISHING-GATE

Written at Rydal Mount. See also "Wishing-gate Destroyed."

In the vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old high-way leading to Ambleside, is a gate, which, time out of mind, has been called the Wishing-gate, from a belief that wishes formed or indulged there have a favourable issue.

Hope rules a land for ever green:
All powers that serve the bright-eyed Queen
Are confident and gay;
Clouds at her bidding disappear;
Points she to aught?—the bliss draws near,
And Fancy smooths the way.

Not such the land of Wishes—there
Dwell fruitless day-dreams, lawless prayer,
And thoughts with things at strife;
Yet how forlorn, should *ye* depart
Ye superstitions of the *heart*,
How poor, were human life!

When magic lore abjured its might,
Ye did not forfeit one dear right,
One tender claim abate;
Witness this symbol of your sway,
Surviving near the public way,
The rustic Wishing-gate!

Inquire not if the faery race
Shed kindly influence on the place,
Ere northward they retired;
If here a warrior left a spell,
Panting for glory as he fell;
Or here a saint expired.

Enough that all around is fair,
Composed with Nature's finest care,
And in her fondest love—
Peace to embosom and content—
To overawe the turbulent,
The selfish to reprove.

Yea! even the Stranger from afar,
Reclining on this moss-grown bar,
Unknowing, and unknown,
The infection of the ground partakes,
Longing for his Beloved—who makes
All happiness her own.

Then why should conscious Spirits fear
The mystic stirrings that are here,
The ancient faith disclaim?
The local Genius ne'er befriends
Desires whose course in folly ends,
Whose just reward is shame.

Smile if thou wilt, but not in scorn,
If some, by ceaseless pains outworn,
Here crave an easier lot;
If some have thirsted to renew
A broken vow, or bind a true,
With firmer, holier knot.

And not in vain, when thoughts are cast
Upon the irrevocable past,
Some Penitent sincere
May for a worthier future sigh,
While trickles from his downcast eye
No unavailing tear.

The Worldling, pining to be freed
From turmoil, who would turn or speed
The current of his fate,
Might stop before this favoured scene,
At Nature's call, nor blush to lean
Upon the Wishing-gate.

The Sage, who feels how blind, how weak
Is man, though loth such help to *seek*,
Yet, passing, here might pause,
And thirst for insight to allay
Misgiving, while the crimson day
In quietness withdraws;

Or when the church-clock's knell profound
To Time's first step across the bound
Of midnight makes reply;
Time pressing on with starry crest,
To filial sleep upon the breast
Of dread eternity. 1828.

THE WISHING-GATE DESTROYED

'Tis gone—with old belief and dream
That round it clung, and tempting scheme
Released from fear and doubt;
And the bright landscape too must lie,
By this blank wall, from every eye,
Relentlessly shut out.

Bear witness ye who seldom passed
That opening—but a look ye cast
Upon the lake below,
What spirit-stirring power it gained
From faith which here was entertained,
Though reason might say no.

Blest is that ground, where, o'er the springs
Of history, Glory claps her wings,
Fame sheds the exulting tear;
Yet earth is wide, and many a nook
Unheard of is, like this, a book
For modest meanings dear.

It was in sooth a happy thought
That grafted, on so fair a spot,
So confident a token
Of coming good;—the charm is fled,
Indulgent centuries spun a thread,
Which one harsh day has broken.

Alas! for him who gave the word;
Could he no sympathy afford,
Derived from earth or heaven,
To hearts so oft by hope betrayed;
Their very wishes wanted aid
Which here was freely given?

Where, for the love-lorn maiden's wound,
Will now so readily be found
A balm of expectation?
Anxious for far-off children, where
Shall mothers breathe a like sweet air
Of home-felt consolation?

And not unfelt will prove the loss
'Mid trivial care and petty cross
And each day's shallow grief;
Though the most easily beguiled
Were oft among the first that smiled
At their own fond belief.

If still the reckless change we mourn,
A reconciling thought may turn
To harm that might lurk here,
Ere judgment prompted from within
Fit aims, with courage to begin,
And strength to persevere.

Not Fortune's slave is Man: our state
Enjoins, while firm resolves await
On wishes just and wise.
That strenuous action follow both,
And life be one perpetual growth
Of heaven-ward enterprise.

So taught, so trained, we boldly face
All accidents of time and place;
Whatever props may fail,
Trust in that sovereign law can spread
New glory o'er the mountain's head,
Fresh beauty through the vale.

That truth informing mind and heart,
The simplest cottager may part,
Ungrieved, with charm and spell;
And yet, lost Wishing-gate, to thee
The voice of grateful memory
Shall bid a kind farewell![1] 1828.

A JEWISH FAMILY

IN A SMALL VALLEY OPPOSITE ST. GOAR, UPON THE RHINE

Coleridge, my daughter, and I, in 1828, passed a fortnight upon the banks of the Rhine, principally under the hospitable roof of Mr. Aders of Gotesburg, but two days of the time we spent at St. Goar in rambles among the neighbouring valleys. It was at St. Goar that I saw the Jewish family here described. Though exceedingly poor, and in rags, they were not less beautiful than I have endeavoured to make them appear. We had taken a little dinner with us in a basket, and invited them to partake of it, which the mother refused to do, both for herself and children, saying it was with them a fast-day; adding diffidently, that whether such observances were right or wrong, she felt it her duty to keep them strictly. The Jews, who are numerous on this part of the Rhine, greatly surpass the German peasantry in the beauty of their features and in the intelligence of their countenances. But the lower classes of the German peasantry have, here at least, the air of people grievously oppressed. Nursing mothers, at the age of seven or eight and twenty often look haggard and far more decayed and withered than women of Cumberland and Westmoreland twice their age. This comes from being underfed and overworked in their vineyards in a hot and glaring sun.

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[1] See Note.

Genius of Raphael! if thy wings
Might bear thee to this glen,
With faithful memory left of things
To pencil dear and pen,
Thou would'st forego the neighbouring Rhine,
And all his majesty—
A studious forehead to incline
O'er this poor family.

The Mother—her thou must have seen,
In spirit, ere she came
To dwell these rifted rocks between,
Or found on earth a name;
An image, too, of that sweet Boy,
Thy inspirations give—
Of playfulness, and love, and joy,
Predestined here to live.

Downcast, or shooting glances far,
How beautiful his eyes,
That blend the nature of the star
With that of summer skies!
I speak as if of sense beguiled;
Uncounted months are gone,
Yet am I with the Jewish Child,
That exquisite Saint John.

I see the dark-brown curls, the brow,
The smooth transparent skin,
Refined, as with intent to show
The holiness within;
The grace of parting Infancy
By blushes yet untamed;
Age faithful to the mother's knee,
Nor of her arms ashamed.

Two lovely Sisters, still and sweet
As flowers, stand side by side;
Their soul-subduing looks might cheat
The Christian of his pride:
Such beauty hath the Eternal poured
Upon them not forlorn,
Though of a lineage once abhorred,
Nor yet redeemed from scorn.

Mysterious safeguard, that, in spite
Of poverty and wrong,
Doth here preserve a living light,
From Hebrew fountains sprung;
That gives this ragged group to cast
Around the dell a gleam
Of Palestine, of glory past,
And proud Jerusalem! 1828.

THE GLEANER

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE

This poem was first printed in the Annual called the *Keepsake*. The painter's name I am not sure of, but I think it was Holmes.

That happy gleam of vernal eyes,
Those locks from summer's golden skies,
That o'er thy brow are shed;
That cheek—a kindling of the morn,
That lip—a rose-bud from the thorn,
I saw; and Fancy sped
To scenes Arcadian, whispering, through soft air,
Of bliss that grows without a care,
And happiness that never flies—
(How can it where love never dies?)
Whispering of promise, where no blight
Can reach the innocent delight;
Where pity, to the mind conveyed
In pleasure, is the darkest shade
That Time, unwrinkled grandsire, flings
From his smoothly gliding wings.
What mortal form, what earthly face
Inspired the pencil, lines to trace,
And mingle colours, that should breed
Such rapture, nor want power to feed;
For had thy charge been idle flowers,
Fair Damsel! o'er my captive mind,
To truth and sober reason blind,
'Mid that soft air, those long-lost bowers,
The sweet illusion might have hung, fo
hours.
Thanks to this tell-tale sheaf of corn,
That touchingly bespeaks thee born

Life's daily tasks with them to share
Who, whether from their lowly bed
They rise, or rest the weary head,
Ponder the blessing they entreat
From Heaven, and *feel* what they repeat,
While they give utterance to the prayer
That asks for daily bread. 1828.

ON THE POWER OF SOUND

Written at Rydal Mount. I have often regretted that my tour in Ireland, chiefly performed in the short days of October in a Carriage-and-four (I was with Mr. Marshall), supplied my memory with so few images that were new, and with so little motive to write. The lines however in this poem, "Thou too be heard, lone eagle!" were suggested near the Giant's Causeway, or rather at the promontory of Fairhead, where a pair of eagles wheeled above our heads and darted off as if to hide themselves in a blaze of sky made by the setting sun.

ARGUMENT

The Ear addressed, as occupied by a spiritual functionary, in communion with sounds, individual, or combined in studied harmony—Sources and effects of those sounds (to the close of 6th Stanza)—The power of music, whence proceeding, exemplified in the idiot—Origin of music, and its effect in early ages—How produced (to the middle of 10th Stanza)—The mind recalled to sounds acting casually and severally—Wish uttered (11th Stanza) that these could be united into a scheme or system for moral interests and intellectual contemplation—(Stanza 12th) The Pythagorean theory of numbers and music, with their supposed power over the motions of the universe—Imaginations consonant with such a theory—Wish expressed (in 11th Stanza) realised, in some degree, by the representation of all sounds under the form of thanksgiving to the Creator—(Last Stanza) the destruction of earth and the planetary system—The survival of audible harmony, and its support in the Divine Nature, as revealed in Holy Writ.

I

Thy functions are ethereal,
As if within thee dwelt a glancing mind,
Organ of vision! And a Spirit aërial
Informs the cell of Hearing, dark and blind;
Intricate labyrinth, more dread for thought
To enter than oracular cave;
Strict passage, through which sighs are brought,
And whispers for the heart, their slave;
And shrieks, that revel in abuse
Of shivering flesh; and warbled air,
Whose piercing sweetness can unloose
The chains of frenzy, or entice a smile
Into the ambush of despair;
Hosannas pealing down the long-drawn aisle,
And requiems answered by the pulse that beats
Devoutly, in life's last retreats!

II

The headlong streams and fountains
Serve Thee, invisible Spirit, with untired powers;
Cheering the wakeful tent on Syrian mountains,
They lull perchance ten thousand thousand flowers.
That roar, the prowling lion's *Here I am*,
How fearful to the desert wide!
That bleat, how tender! of the dam
Calling a straggler to her side.
Shout, cuckoo!—let the vernal soul
Go with thee to the frozen zone;
Toll from thy loftiest perch, lone bell-bird, toll!
At the still hour to Mercy dear,
Mercy from her twilight throne
Listening to nun's faint throb of holy fear,
To sailor's prayer breathed from a darkening sea,
Or widow's cottage-lullaby.

III

Ye Voices, and ye Shadows
And Images of voice—to hound and horn
From rocky steep and rock-bestudded meadows
Flung back, and, in the sky's blue caves, reborn—
On with your pastime! till the church-tower bells
A greeting give of measured glee;
And milder echoes from their cells
Repeat the bridal symphony.
Then, or far earlier, let us rove
Where mists are breaking up or gone,
And from aloft look down into a cove

Besprinkled with a careless quire,
Happy milk-maids, one by one
Scattering a ditty each to her desire,
A liquid concert matchless by nice Art,
A stream as if from one full heart.

IV

Blest be the song that brightens
The blind man's gloom, exalts the veteran's mirth;
Unscorned the peasant's whistling breath, that lightens
His duteous toil of furrowing the green earth.
For the tired slave, Song lifts the languid oar,
And bids it aptly fall, with chime
That beautifies the fairest shore,
And mitigates the harshest clime.
Yon pilgrims see—in lagging file
They move; but soon the appointed way
A choral *Ave Marie* shall beguile,
And to their hope the distant shrine
Glisten with a livelier ray:
Nor friendless he, the prisoner of the mine,
Who from the well-spring of his own clear breast
Can draw, and sing his griefs to rest.

V

When civic renovation
Dawns on a kingdom, and for needful haste
Best eloquence avails not, Inspiration
Mounts with a tune, that travels like a blast
Piping through cave and battlemented tower;
Then starts the sluggard, pleased to meet
That voice of Freedom, in its power
Of promises, shrill, wild, and sweet!
Who, from a martial *pageant*, spreads
Incitements of a battle-day,
Thrilling the unweaponed crowd with plumeless heads?—
Even She whose Lydian airs inspire
Peaceful striving, gentle play
Of timid hope and innocent desire
Shot from the dancing Graces, as they move
Fanned by the plausive wings of Love.

VI

How oft along thy mazes,
Regent of sound, have dangerous Passions trod!
O Thou, through whom the temple rings with praises,
And blackening clouds in thunder speak of God,
Betray not by the cozenage of sense
Thy votaries, wooingly resigned
To a voluptuous influence
That taints the purer, better, mind;
But lead sick Fancy to a harp
That hath in noble tasks been tried;
And, if the virtuous feel a pang too sharp,
Soothe it into patience,—stay
The uplifted arm of Suicide;
And let some mood of thine in firm array
Knit every thought the impending issue needs,
Ere martyr burns, or patriot bleeds!

VII

As Conscience, to the centre
Of being, smites with irresistible pain
So shall a solemn cadence, if it enter
The mouldy vaults of the dull idiot's brain,
Transmute him to a wretch from quiet hurled—
Convulsed as by a jarring din;
And then aghast, as at the world
Of reason partially let in
By concords winding with a sway
Terrible for sense and soul!
Or, awed he weeps, struggling to quell dismay.
Point not these mysteries to an Art
Lodged above the starry pole;
Pure modulations flowing from the heart
Of divine Love, where Wisdom, Beauty, Truth
With Order dwell, in endless youth?

VIII

Oblivion may not cover
All treasures hoarded by the miser, Time.
Orphean Insight! truth's undaunted lover,
To the first leagues of tutored passion climb,
When Music deigned within this grosser sphere
Her subtle essence to enfold,
And voice and shell drew forth a tear
Softer than Nature's self could mould.
Yet *strenuous* was the infant Age:
Art, daring because souls could feel,
Stirred nowhere but an urgent equipage
Of rapt imagination sped her march

Through the realms of woe and weal:
Hell to the lyre bowed low; the upper arch
Rejoiced that clamorous spell and magic verse
Her wan disasters could disperse.

IX

The Gift to king Amphion
That walled a city with its melody
Was for belief no dream:—thy skill, Arion!
Could humanise the creatures of the sea,
Where men were monsters. A last grace he craves,
Leave for one chant;—the dulcet sound
Steals from the deck o'er willing waves,
And listening dolphins gather round.
Self-cast, as with a desperate course,
'Mid that strange audience, he bestrides
A proud One docile as a managed horse;
And singing, while the accordant hand
Sweeps his harp, the Master rides;
So shall he touch at length a friendly strand,
And he, with his preserver, shine star-bright
In memory, through silent night.

X

The pipe of Pan, to shepherds
Couched in the shadow of Mænalian pines,
Was passing sweet; the eyeballs of the leopards,
That in high triumph drew the Lord of vines,
How did they sparkle to the cymbal's clang!
While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground
In cadence,—and Silenus swang
This way and that, with wild-flowers crowned.
To life, to *life* give back thine ear:
Ye who are longing to be rid
Of fable, though to truth subservient, hear
The little sprinkling of cold earth that fell
Echoed from the coffin-lid;
The convict's summons in the steeple's knell;
"The vain distress-gun," from a leeward shore,
Repeated—heard, and heard no more!

XI

For terror, joy, or pity,
Vast is the compass and the swell of notes:
From the babe's first cry to voice of regal city,
Rolling a solemn sea-like bass, that floats
Far as the woodlands—with the trill to blend
Of that shy songstress, whose love-tale
Might tempt an angel to descend,
While hovering o'er the moonlight vale.
Ye wandering Utterances, has earth no scheme,
No scale of moral music—to unite
Powers that survive but in the faintest dream
Of memory?—O that ye might stoop to bear
Chains, such precious chains of sight
As laboured minstrelsies through ages wear!
O for a balance fit the truth to tell
Of the Unsubstantial, pondered well!

XII

By one pervading spirit
Of tones and numbers all things are controlled,
As sages taught, where faith was found to merit
Initiation in that mystery old.
The heavens, whose aspect makes our minds as still
As they themselves appear to be,
Innumerable voices fill
With everlasting harmony;
The towering headlands, crowned with mist,
Their feet among the billows, know
That Ocean is a mighty harmonist;
Thy pinions, universal Air,
Ever waving to and fro,
Are delegates of harmony, and bear
Strains that support the Seasons in their round;
Stern Winter loves a dirge-like sound.

XIII

Break forth into thanksgiving,
Ye banded instruments of wind and chords
Unite, to magnify the Ever-living,
Your inarticulate notes with the voice of words!
Nor hushed be service from the lowing mead,
Nor mute the forest hum of noon;
Thou too be heard, lone eagle! freed

From snowy peak and cloud, attune
Thy hungry barkings to the hymn
Of joy, that from her utmost walls
The six-days' Work, by flaming Seraphim
Transmits to Heaven! As Deep to Deep
Shouting through one valley calls,
All worlds, all natures, mood and measure
keep
For praise and ceaseless gratulation, poured
Into the ear of God, their Lord!

XIV

A Voice to Light gave Being;
To Time, and Man, his earth-born
chronicler;
A Voice shall finish doubt and dim foreseeing,
And sweep away life's visionary stir;
The trumpet (we, intoxicate with pride,
Arm at its blast for deadly wars)
To archangelic lips applied,
The grave shall open, quench the stars.
O Silence! are Man's noisy years
No more than moments of thy life?
Is Harmony, blest queen of smiles and tears,
With her smooth tones and discords just,
Tempered into rapturous strife,
Thy destined bond-slave? No! though
earth be dust
And vanish, though the heavens dissolve,
her stay
Is in the WORD, that shall not pass away.
1828.

INCIDENT AT BRUGÈS

This occurred at Brugès in 1828. Mr. Coleridge, my Daughter, and I made a tour together in Flanders, upon the Rhine, and returned by Holland. Dora and I, while taking a walk along a retired part of the town, heard the voice as here described, and were afterwards informed it was a Convent in which were many English. We were both much touched, I might say affected, and Dora moved as appears in the verses.

IN Brugès town is many a street
Whence busy life hath fled;
Where, without hurry, noiseless feet
The grass-grown pavement tread.
There heard we, halting in the shade
Flung from a Convent-tower,
A harp that tuneful prelude made
To a voice of thrilling power.

The measure, simple truth to tell,
Was fit for some gay throng;
Though from the same grim turret fell
The shadow and the song.
When silent were both voice and chords,
The strain seemed doubly dear,
Yet sad as sweet,—for *English* words
Had fallen upon the ear.

It was a breezy hour of eve;
And pinnacle and spire
Quivered and seemed almost to heave,
Clothed with innocuous fire;
But, where we stood, the setting sun
Showed little of his state;
And, if the glory reached the Nun,
'Twas through an iron grate.

Not always is the heart unwise,
Nor pity idly born,
If even a passing Stranger sighs
For them who do not mourn.
Sad is thy doom, self-solaced dove,
Captive, whoe'er thou be!
Oh! what is beauty, what is love,
And opening life to thee?

Such feeling pressed upon my soul,
A feeling sanctified
By one soft trickling tear that stole
From the Maiden at my side;
Less tribute could she pay than this,
Borne gaily o'er the sea,
Fresh from the beauty and the bliss
Of English liberty?
1828.

GOLD AND SILVER FISHES IN A VASE

They were a present from Miss Jewsbury, o whom mention is made in the note at the end o the next poem. The fish were healthy to all appearance in their confinement for a long time, bu at last, for some cause we could not make out they languished, and, one of them being all bu dead, they were taken to the pool under the ol Pollard-oak. The apparently dying one lay o its side unable to move. I used to watch it, an about the tenth day it began to right itself, an in a few days more was able to swim about wit its companions. For many months they continued to prosper in their new place of abode but one night by an unusually great flood the were swept out of the pool, and perished to our great regret.

THE soaring lark is blest as proud
When at heaven's gate she sings;
The roving bee proclaims aloud
Her flight by vocal wings;
While Ye, in lasting durance pent,
Your silent lives employ
For something more than dull content,
Though haply less than joy.

Yet might your glassy prison seem
A place where joy is known,
Where golden flash and silver gleam
Have meanings of their own;
While, high and low, and all about,
Your motions, glittering Elves!
Ye weave—no danger from without,
And peace among yourselves.

Type of a sunny human breast
Is your transparent cell;
Where Fear is but a transient guest,
No sullen Humours dwell;
Where, sensitive of every ray
That smites this tiny sea,
Your scaly panoplies repay
The loan with usury.

How beautiful!—Yet none knows why
This ever-graceful change,
Renewed—renewed incessantly—
Within your quiet range.
Is it that ye with conscious skill
For mutual pleasure glide;
And sometimes, not without your will,
Are dwarfed, or magnified?

Fays, Genii of gigantic size!
And now, in twilight dim,
Clustering like constellated eyes,
In wings of Cherubim,
When the fierce orbs abate their glare;—
Whate'er your forms express,
Whate'er ye seem, whate'er ye are—
All leads to gentleness.

Cold though your nature be, 'tis pure;
Your birthright is a fence
From all that haughtier kinds endure
Through tyranny of sense.
Ah! not alone by colours bright
Are Ye to heaven allied,
When, like essential Forms of light,
Ye mingle, or divide.

For day-dreams soft as e'er beguiled
Day-thoughts while limbs repose;
For moonlight fascinations mild,
Your gift, ere shutters close—
Accept, mute Captives! thanks and praise;
And may this tribute prove
That gentle admirations raise
Delight resembling love. 1829.

LIBERTY

(SEQUEL TO THE ABOVE)

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND; THE GOLD AND SILVER FISHES HAVING BEEN REMOVED TO A POOL IN THE PLEASURE-GROUND OF RYDAL MOUNT.

"The liberty of a people consists in being governed by laws which they have made for themselves, under whatever form it be of government. The liberty of a private man, in being master of his own time and actions, as far as may consist with the laws of God and of his country. Of this latter we are here to discourse."
—COWLEY.

THOSE breathing Tokens of your kind regard,
(Suspect not, Anna, that their fate is hard;
Not soon does aught to which mild fancies cling
In lonely spots, become a slighted thing;)
Those silent Inmates now no longer share,
Nor do they need, our hospitable care,
Removed in kindness from their glassy Cell
To the fresh waters of a living Well—
An elfin pool so sheltered that its rest
No winds disturb; the mirror of whose breast
Is smooth as clear, save where with dimples small
A fly may settle, or a blossom fall.
—*There* swims, of blazing sun and beating shower
Fearless (but how obscured!) the golden Power,
That from his bauble prison used to cast
Gleams by the richest jewel unsurpast;
And near him, darkling like a sullen Gnome,
The silver Tenant of the crystal dome;
Dissevered both from all the mysteries

Of hue and altering shape that charmed all eyes.
Alas! they pined, they languished while they shone;
And, if not so, what matters beauty gone
And admiration lost, by change of place
That brings to the inward creature no disgrace?
But if the change restore his birthright, then,
Whate'er the difference, boundless is the gain.
Who can divine what impulses from God
Reach the caged lark, within a town-abode,
From his poor inch or two of daisied sod?
O yield him back his privilege!—No sea
Swells like the bosom of a man set free;
A wilderness is rich with liberty.
Roll on, ye spouting whales, who die or keep
Your independence in the fathomless Deep!
Spread, tiny nautilus, the living sail;
Dive, at thy choice, or brave the freshening gale!
If unreproved the ambitious eagle mount
Sunward to seek the daylight in its fount,
Bays, gulfs, and ocean's Indian width, shall be,
Till the world perishes, a field for thee!
  While musing here I sit in shadow cool,
And watch these mute Companions, in the pool,
(Among reflected boughs of leafy trees)
By glimpses caught—disporting at their ease,
Enlivened, braced, by hardy luxuries,
I ask what warrant fixed them (like a spell
Of witchcraft fixed them) in the crystal cell;
To wheel with languid motion round and round,
Beautiful, yet in mournful durance bound.
Their peace, perhaps, our lightest footfall marred;
On their quick sense our sweetest music jarred;
And whither could they dart, if seized with fear?
No sheltering stone, no tangled root was near.
When fire or taper ceased to cheer the room,
They wore away the night in starless gloom;
And, when the sun first dawned upon the streams,
How faint their portion of his vital beams!
Thus, and unable to complain, they fared,
While not one joy of ours by them wa shared.
  Is there a cherished bird (I venture now
To snatch a sprig from Chaucer's reverenc brow)—
Is there a brilliant fondling of the cage,
Though sure of plaudits on his costly stage
Though fed with dainties from the snow-white hand
Of a kind mistress, fairest of the land,
But gladly would escape; and, if need were
Scatter the colours from the plumes tha bear
The emancipated captive through blithe ai
Into strange woods, where he at large ma live
On best or worst which they and Natur give?
The beetle loves his unpretending track,
The snail the house he carries on his back
The far-fetched worm with pleasure woul disown
The bed we give him, though of softes down;
A noble instinct; in all kinds the same,
All ranks! What Sovereign, worthy of th name,
If doomed to breathe against his lawful wil
An element that flatters him—to kill,
But would rejoice to barter outward show
For the least boon that freedom can bestow
  But most the Bard is true to inborn right
Lark of the dawn, and Philomel of night,
Exults in freedom, can with rapture vouch
For the dear blessings of a lowly couch,
A natural meal—days, months, fron Nature's hand;
Time, place, and business, all at his command!—
Who bends to happier duties, who mor wise
Than the industrious Poet, taught to prize
Above all grandeur, a pure life uncrossed
By cares in which simplicity is lost?
That life—the flowery path that winds b stealth—
Which Horace needed for his spirit's health
Sighed for, in heart and genius, overcome
By noise and strife, and questions wearisome
And the vain splendours of Imperia Rome?—
Let easy mirth his social hours inspire,
And fiction animate his sportive lyre,

Attuned to verse that, crowning light Distress
With garlands, cheats her into happiness;
Give *me* the humblest note of those sad strains
Drawn forth by pressure of his gilded chains,
As a chance-sunbeam from his memory fell
Upon the Sabine farm he loved so well;
Or when the prattle of Blandusia's spring
Haunted his ear—he only listening—
He, proud to please, above all rivals, fit
To win the palm of gaiety and wit;
He, doubt not, with involuntary dread,
Shrinking from each new favour to be shed,
By the world's Ruler, on his honoured head!
In a deep vision's intellectual scene,
Such earnest longings and regrets as keen
Depressed the melancholy Cowley, laid
Under a fancied yew-tree's luckless shade;
A doleful bower for penitential song,
Where Man and Muse complained of mutual wrong;
While Cam's ideal current glided by,
And antique towers nodded their foreheads high,
Citadels dear to studious privacy.
But Fortune, who had long been used to sport
With this tried Servant of a thankless Court,
Relenting met his wishes; and to you
The remnant of his days at least was true;
You, whom, though long deserted, he loved best;
You, Muses, books, fields, liberty, and rest!
Far happier they who, fixing hope and aim
On the humanities of peaceful fame,
Enter betimes with more than martial fire
The generous course, aspire, and still aspire;
Upheld by warnings heeded not too late
Stifle the contradictions of their fate,
And to one purpose cleave, their Being's godlike mate!
Thus, gifted Friend, but with the placid brow
That woman ne'er should forfeit, keep *thy* vow;
With modest scorn reject whate'er would blind
The ethereal eyesight, cramp the wingèd mind!
Then, with a blessing granted from above
To every act, word, thought, and look of love,
Life's book for Thee may lie unclosed, till age
Shall with a thankful tear bedrop its latest page.[1]

1829.

HUMANITY

These verses and those entitled "Liberty" were composed as one piece, which Mrs. Wordsworth complained of as unwieldy and ill-proportioned; and accordingly it was divided into two on her judicious recommendation.

The Rocking-stones, alluded to in the beginning of the following verses, are supposed to have been used, by our British ancestors, both for judicial and religious purposes. Such stones are not uncommonly found, at this day, both in Great Britain and in Ireland.

WHAT though the Accused, upon his own appeal
To righteous Gods when man has ceased to feel,
Or at a doubting Judge's stern command,
Before the STONE OF POWER no longer stand—
To take his sentence from the balanced Block,
As, at his touch, it rocks, or seems to rock;
Though, in the depths of sunless groves, no more

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[1] There is now, alas! no possibility of the anticipation, with which the above Epistle concludes, being realised: nor were the verses ever seen by the Individual for whom they were intended. She accompanied her husband, the Rev. Wm. Fletcher, to India, and died of cholera, at the age of thirty-two or thirty-three years, on her way from Shalapore to Bombay, deeply lamented by all who knew her.

Her enthusiasm was ardent, her piety steadfast; and her great talents would have enabled her to be eminently useful in the difficult path of life to which she had been called. The opinion she entertained of her own performances, given to the world under her maiden name, Jewsbury, was modest and humble, and, indeed, far below their merits; as is often the case with those who are making trial of their powers, with a hope to discover what they are best fitted for. In one quality, viz. quickness in the motions of her mind, she had, within the range of the Author's acquaintance, no equal.

The Druid-priest the hallowed Oak adore;
Yet, for the Initiate, rocks and whispering trees
Do still perform mysterious offices!
And functions dwell in beast and bird that sway
The reasoning mind, or with the fancy play,
Inviting, at all seasons, ears and eyes
To watch for undelusive auguries:—
Not uninspired appear their simplest ways;
Their voices mount symbolical of praise—
To mix with hymns that Spirits make and hear;
And to fallen man their innocence is dear.
Enraptured Art draws from those sacred springs
Streams that reflect the poetry of things!
Where christian Martyrs stand in hues portrayed,
That, might a wish avail, would never fade;
Borne in their hands the lily and the palm
Shed round the altar a celestial calm;
There, too, behold the lamb and guileless dove
Prest in the tenderness of virgin love
To saintly bosoms!—Glorious is the blending
Of right affections climbing or descending
Along a scale of light and life, with cares
Alternate; carrying holy thoughts and prayers
Up to the sovereign seat of the Most High;
Descending to the worm in charity;[1]
Like those good Angels whom a dream of night
Gave, in the field of Luz, to Jacob's sight
All, while *he* slept, treading the pendent stairs
Earthward or heavenward, radiant messengers,
That, with a perfect will in one accord
Of strict obedience, serve the Almighty Lord;
And with untired humility forbore
To speed their errand by the wings they wore.
What a fair world were ours for verse to paint,
If Power could live at ease with self-restraint!
Opinion bow before the naked sense
Of the great Vision,—faith in Providence;
Merciful over all his creatures, just
To the least particle of sentient dust:
But, fixing by immutable decrees,
Seedtime and harvest for his purposes!
Then would be closed the restless oblique eye
That looks for evil like a treacherous spy;
Disputes would then relax, like stormy winds
That into breezes sink; impetuous minds
By discipline endeavour to grow meek
As Truth herself, whom they profess to seek.
Then Genius, shunning fellowship with Pride,
Would braid his golden locks at Wisdom's side;
Love ebb and flow untroubled by caprice;
And not alone *harsh* tyranny would cease,
But unoffending creatures find release
From qualified oppression, whose defence
Rests on a hollow plea of recompence;
Thought-tempered wrongs, for each humane respect
Oft worse to bear, or deadlier in effect.
Witness those glances of indignant scorn
From some high-minded Slave, impelled to spurn
The kindness that would make him less forlorn;
Or, if the soul to bondage be subdued,
His look of pitiable gratitude!
Alas for thee, bright Galaxy of Isles,
Whose day departs in pomp, returns with smiles—
To greet the flowers and fruitage of a land,
As the sun mounts, by sea-born breezes fanned;
A land whose azure mountain-tops are seats
For Gods in council, whose green vales, retreats
Fit for the shades of heroes, mingling there
To breathe Elysian peace in upper air.
Though cold as winter, gloomy as the grave,
Stone-walls a prisoner make, but not a slave.
Shall man assume a property in man?
Lay on the moral will a withering ban?
Shame that our laws at distance still protect
Enormities, which they at home reject!
"Slaves cannot breathe in England"—ye that boast
Is but a mockery! when from coast to coast
Though *fettered* slave be none, her floors and soil

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[1] See Note.

Groan underneath a weight of slavish toil,
For the poor Many, measured out by rules
Fetched with cupidity from heartless schools,
That to an Idol, falsely called "the Wealth
Of Nations," sacrifice a People's health,
Body and mind and soul; a thirst so keen
Is ever urging on the vast machine
Of sleepless Labour, 'mid whose dizzy wheels
The Power least prized is that which thinks and feels.
Then, for the pastimes of this delicate age,
And all the heavy or light vassalage
Which for their sakes we fasten, as may suit
Our varying moods, on human kind or brute,
'Twere well in little, as in great, to pause,
Lest Fancy trifle with eternal laws.
Not from his fellows only man may learn
Rights to compare and duties to discern!
All creatures and all objects, in degree,
Are friends and patrons of humanity.
There are to whom the garden, grove, and field,
Perpetual lessons of forbearance yield;
Who would not lightly violate the grace
The lowliest flower possesses in its place;
Nor shorten the sweet life, too fugitive,
Which nothing less than Infinite Power could give. 1829.

"THIS LAWN, A CARPET ALL ALIVE"

This Lawn is the sloping one approaching the kitchen-garden, and was made out of it. Hundreds of times have I watched the dancing of shadows amid a press of sunshine, and other beautiful appearances of light and shade, flowers and shrubs. What a contrast between this and the cabbages and onions and carrots that used to grow there on a piece of ugly-shaped unsightly ground! No reflection, however, either upon cabbages or onions; the latter we know were worshipped by the Egyptians, and he must have a poor eye for beauty who has not observed how much of it there is in the form and colour which cabbages and plants of that genus exhibit through the various stages of their growth and decay. A richer display of colour in vegetable nature can scarcely be conceived than Coleridge, my Sister, and I saw in a bed of potato-plants in blossom near a hut upon the moor between Inversneyd and Loch Katrine. These blossoms were of such extraordinary beauty and richness that no one could have passed them without notice. But the sense must be cultivated through the mind before we can perceive these inexhaustible treasures of Nature, for such they really are, without the least necessary reference to the utility of her productions, or even to the laws whereupon, as we learn by research, they are dependent. Some are of opinion that the habit of analysing, decomposing, and anatomising is inevitably unfavourable to the perception of beauty. People are led into this mistake by overlooking the fact that such processes being to a certain extent within the reach of a limited intellect, we are apt to ascribe to them that insensibility of which they are in truth the effect and not the cause. Admiration and love, to which all knowledge truly vital must tend, are felt by men of real genius in proportion as their discoveries in natural Philosophy are enlarged; and the beauty in form of a plant or an animal is not made less but more apparent as a whole by more accurate insight into its constituent properties and powers. A *Savant* who is not also a poet in soul and a religionist in heart is a feeble and unhappy creature.

THIS Lawn, a carpet all alive
With shadows flung from leaves—to strive
In dance, amid a press
Of sunshine, an apt emblem yields
Of Worldlings revelling in the fields
Of strenuous idleness;

Less quick the stir when tide and breeze
Encounter, and to narrow seas
Forbid a moment's rest;
The medley less when boreal Lights
Glance to and fro, like aery Sprites
To feats of arms addrest!

Yet, spite of all this eager strife,
This ceaseless play, the genuine life
That serves the stedfast hours,
Is in the grass beneath, that grows
Unheeded, and the mute repose
Of sweetly-breathing flowers. 1829.

THOUGHT ON THE SEASONS

Written at Rydal Mount.

FLATTERED with promise of escape
From every hurtful blast,
Spring takes, O sprightly May! thy shape,
Her loveliest and her last.

Less fair is summer riding high
  In fierce solstitial power,
Less fair than when a lenient sky
  Brings on her parting hour.

When earth repays with golden sheaves
  The labours of the plough,
And ripening fruits and forest leaves
  All brighten on the bough;

What pensive beauty autumn shows,
  Before she hears the sound
Of winter rushing in, to close
  The emblematic round!

Such be our Spring, our Summer such;
  So may our Autumn blend
With hoary Winter, and Life touch,
  Through heaven-born hope, her end!
1829.

A GRAVESTONE UPON THE FLOOR IN THE CLOISTERS OF WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

"Miserrimus." Many conjectures have been formed as to the person who lies under this stone. Nothing appears to be known for a certainty. Query—The Rev. Mr. Morris, a nonconformist, a sufferer for conscience-sake; a worthy man who, having been deprived of his benefice after the accession of William III., lived to an old age in extreme destitution, on the alms of charitable Jacobites.

"*MISERRIMUS*," and neither name nor date,
Prayer, text, or symbol, graven upon the
    stone;
Nought but that word assigned to the un-
    known,
That solitary word—to separate
From all, and cast a cloud around the fate
Of him who lies beneath. Most wretched
    one,
Who chose his epitaph?—Himself alone
Could thus have dared the grave to agitate,
And claim, among the dead, this awful
    crown;
Nor doubt that He marked also for his own
Close to these cloistral steps a burial-place,
That every foot might fall with heavier tread,
Trampling upon his vileness. Stranger, pass
Softly!—To save the contrite, Jesus bled.
1829.

A TRADITION OF OKER HILL IN DARLEY DALE, DERBYSHIRE

This pleasing tradition was told me by the coachman at whose side I sate while he drove down the dale, he pointing to the trees on the hill as he related the story.

'TIS said that to the brow of yon fair hill
Two Brothers clomb, and, turning face
    from face,
Nor one look more exchanging, grief to still
Or feed, each planted on that lofty place
A chosen Tree; then, eager to fulfil
Their courses, like two new-born rivers,
    they
In opposite directions urged their way
Down from the far-seen mount. No blas
    might kill
Or blight that fond memorial;—the trees
    grew,
And now entwine their arms; but ne'e
    again
Embraced those Brothers upon earth's wid
    plain;
Nor aught of mutual joy or sorrow knew
Until their spirits mingled in the sea
That to itself takes all, Eternity. 1829

THE ARMENIAN LADY'S LOVE

Written at Rydal Mount.

The subject of the following poem is from th *Orlandus* of the author's friend, Kenelm Henr Digby: and the liberty is taken of inscribing i to him as an acknowledgment, however unworthy of pleasure and instruction derived from hi numerous and valuable writings, illustrative c the piety and chivalry of the olden time.

I

YOU have heard "a Spanish Lady
  How she wooed an English man;"[1]
Hear now of a fair Armenian,
  Daughter of the proud Soldàn;
How she loved a Christian slave, and tol
    her pain
By word, look, deed, with hope that h
    might love again.

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[1] See, in Percy's *Reliques*, that fine old balla "The Spanish Lady's Love;" from which Poe the form of stanza, as suitable to dialogue, adopted.

II

"Pluck that rose, it moves my liking,"
Said she, lifting up her veil;
"Pluck it for me, gentle gardener,
Ere it wither and grow pale."
"Princess fair, I till the ground, but may not take
From twig or bed an humbler flower, even for your sake!"

III

"Grieved am I, submissive Christian!
To behold thy captive state;
Women, in your land, may pity
(May they not?) the unfortunate."
"Yes, kind Lady! otherwise man could not bear
Life, which to every one that breathes is full of care."

IV

"Worse than idle is compassion
If it end in tears and sighs;
Thee from bondage would I rescue
And from vile indignities;
Nurtured, as thy mien bespeaks, in high degree,
Look up—and help a hand that longs to set thee free."

V

"Lady! dread the wish, nor venture
In such peril to engage;
Think how it would stir against you
Your most loving father's rage:
Sad deliverance would it be, and yoked with shame,
Should troubles overflow on her from whom it came."

VI

"Generous Frank! the just in effort
Are of inward peace secure:
Hardships for the brave encountered,
Even the feeblest may endure:
If almighty grace through me thy chains unbind
My father for slave's work may seek a slave in mind."

VII

"Princess, at this burst of goodness,
My long-frozen heart grows warm!"
"Yet you make all courage fruitless,
Me to save from chance of harm:
Leading such companion I that gilded dome,
Yon minarets, would gladly leave for his worst home."

VIII

"Feeling tunes your voice, fair Princess,
And your brow is free from scorn,
Else these words would come like mockery,
Sharper than the pointed thorn."
"Whence the undeserved mistrust? Too wide apart
Our faith hath been,—O would that eyes could see the heart!"

IX

"Tempt me not, I pray; my doom is
These base implements to wield;
Rusty lance, I ne'er shall grasp thee,
Ne'er assoil my cobwebbed shield!
Never see my native land, nor castle towers,
Nor Her who thinking of me there counts widowed hours."

X

"Prisoner! pardon youthful fancies;
Wedded? If you *can*, say no!
Blessèd is and be your consort;
Hopes I cherished—let them go!
Handmaid's privilege would leave my purpose free,
Without another link to my felicity."

XI

"Wedded love with loyal Christians,
Lady, is a mystery rare;
Body, heart, and soul in union,
Make one being of a pair."
"Humble love in me would look for no return,
Soft as a guiding star that cheers, but cannot burn."

XII

"Gracious Allah! by such title
Do I dare to thank the God,

Him who thus exalts thy spirit,
Flower of an unchristian sod!
Or hast thou put off wings which thou in heaven dost wear?
What have I seen, and heard, or dreamt? where am I? where?"

XIII

Here broke off the dangerous converse:
Less impassioned words might tell
How the pair escaped together,
Tears not wanting, nor a knell
Of sorrow in her heart while through her father's door,
And from her narrow world, she passed for evermore.

XIV

But affections higher, holier,
Urged her steps; she shrunk from trust
In a sensual creed that trampled
Woman's birthright into dust.
Little be the wonder then, the blame be none,
If she, a timid Maid, hath put such boldness on.

XV

Judge both Fugitives with knowledge:
In those old romantic days
Mighty were the soul's commandments
To support, restrain, or raise.
Foes might hang upon their path, snakes rustle near,
But nothing from their inward selves had they to fear.

XVI

Thought infirm ne'er came between them,
Whether printing desert sands
With accordant steps, or gathering
Forest-fruit with social hands;
Or whispering like two reeds that in the cold moonbeam
Bend with the breeze their heads, beside a crystal stream.

XVII

On a friendly deck reposing
They at length for Venice steer;
There, when they had closed their voyage
One, who daily on the pier
Watched for tidings from the East, beheld his Lord,
Fell down and clasped his knees for joy, not uttering word.

XVIII

Mutual was the sudden transport;
Breathless questions followed fast,
Years contracting to a moment,
Each word greedier than the last:
"Hie thee to the Countess, friend! return with speed,
And of this Stranger speak by whom her lord was freed.

XIX

Say that I, who might have languished,
Drooped and pined till life was spent,
Now before the gates of Stolberg
My Deliverer would present
For a crowning recompence, the precious grace
Of her who in my heart still holds her ancient place.

XX

Make it known that my Companion
Is of royal eastern blood,
Thirsting after all perfection,
Innocent, and meek, and good,
Though with misbelievers bred; but that dark night
Will holy Church disperse by means of gospel-light."

XXI

Swiftly went that grey-haired Servant,
Soon returned a trusty Page
Charged with greetings, benedictions,
Thanks and praises, each a gage
For a sunny thought to cheer the Stranger's way,
Her virtuous scruples to remove, her fears allay.

XXII

And how blest the Reunited,
While beneath their castle-walls,
Runs a deafening noise of welcome!—
Blest, though every tear that falls

Doth in its silence of past sorrow tell,
And makes a meeting seem most like a dear farewell.

XXIII

Through a haze of human nature,
Glorified by heavenly light,
Looked the beautiful Deliverer
On that overpowering sight,
While across her virgin cheek pure blushes strayed,
For every tender sacrifice her heart had made.

XXIV

On the ground the weeping Countess
Knelt, and kissed the Stranger's hand;
Act of soul-devoted homage,
Pledge of an eternal band:
Nor did aught of future days that kiss belie,
Which, with a generous shout, the crowd did ratify.

XXV

Constant to the fair Armenian,
Gentle pleasures round her moved,
Like a tutelary spirit
Reverenced, like a sister, loved,
Christian meekness smoothed for all the path of life,
Who, loving most, should wiseliest love, their only strife.

XXVI

Mute memento of that union
In a Saxon church survives,
Where a cross-legged Knight lies sculptured
As between two wedded wives—
Figures with armorial signs of race and birth,
And the vain rank the pilgrims bore while yet on earth.

1830.

THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVE[1]

Early in life this story had interested me, and I often thought it would make a pleasing subject for an opera or musical drama.

PART I

ENOUGH of rose-bud lips, and eyes
Like harebells bathed in dew,
Of cheek that with carnation vies,
And veins of violet hue;
Earth wants not beauty that may scorn
A likening to frail flowers;
Yea, to the stars, if they were born
For seasons and for hours.

Through Moscow's gates, with gold unbarred,
Stepped One at dead of night,
Whom such high beauty could not guard
From meditated blight;
By stealth she passed, and fled as fast
As doth the hunted fawn,
Nor stopped, till in the dappling east
Appeared unwelcome dawn.

Seven days she lurked in brake and field,
Seven nights her course renewed,
Sustained by what her scrip might yield,
Or berries of the wood;
At length, in darkness travelling on,
When lowly doors were shut,
The haven of her hope she won,
Her Foster-mother's hut.

"To put your love to dangerous proof
I come," said she, "from far;
For I have left my Father's roof,
In terror of the Czar."
No answer did the Matron give,
No second look she cast,
But hung upon the Fugitive,
Embracing and embraced.

She led the Lady to a seat
Beside the glimmering fire,
Bathed duteously her wayworn feet,
Prevented each desire:—
The cricket chirped, the house-dog dozed,
And on that simple bed,
Where she in childhood had reposed,
Now rests her weary head.

When she, whose couch had been the sod,
Whose curtain, pine or thorn,
Had breathed a sigh of thanks to God,
Who comforts the forlorn;
While over her the Matron bent
Sleep sealed her eyes, and stole
Feeling from limbs with travel spent,
And trouble from the soul.

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[1] See Note.

Refreshed, the Wanderer rose at morn,
And soon again was dight
In those unworthy vestments worn
Through long and perilous flight;
And "O beloved Nurse," she said,
"My thanks with silent tears
Have unto Heaven and You been paid:
Now listen to my fears!

"Have you forgot"—and here she smiled—
"The babbling flatteries
You lavished on me when a child
Disporting round your knees?
I was your lambkin, and your bird,
Your star, your gem, your flower;
Light words, that were more lightly heard
In many a cloudless hour!

The blossom you so fondly praised
Is come to bitter fruit;
A mighty One upon me gazed;
I spurned his lawless suit,
And must be hidden from his wrath:
You, Foster-father dear,
Will guide me in my forward path;
I may not tarry here!

I cannot bring to utter woe
Your proved fidelity."—
"Dear Child, sweet Mistress, say not so!
For you we both would die."
"Nay, nay, I come with semblance feigned
And cheek embrowned by art;
Yet, being inwardly unstained,
With courage will depart."

"But whither would you, could you, flee?
A poor Man's counsel take;
The Holy Virgin gives to me
A thought for your dear sake;
Rest, shielded by our Lady's grace,
And soon shall you be led
Forth to a safe abiding-place,
Where never foot doth tread."

PART II

THE dwelling of this faithful pair
In a straggling village stood,
For One who breathed unquiet air
A dangerous neighbourhood;
But wide around lay forest ground
With thickets rough and blind;
And pine-trees made a heavy shade
Impervious to the wind.

And there, sequestered from the sight,
Was spread a treacherous swamp,
On which the noonday sun shed light
As from a lonely lamp;
And midway in the unsafe morass,
A single Island rose
Of firm dry ground, with healthful grass
Adorned, and shady boughs.

The Woodman knew, for such the craft
This Russian vassal plied,
That never fowler's gun, nor shaft
Of archer, there was tried;
A sanctuary seemed the spot
From all intrusion free;
And there he planned an artful Cot
For perfect secrecy.

With earnest pains unchecked by dread
Of Power's far-stretching hand,
The bold good Man his labour sped
At nature's pure command;
Heart-soothed, and busy as a wren,
While, in a hollow nook,
She moulds her sight-eluding den
Above a murmuring brook.

His task accomplished to his mind,
The twain ere break of day
Creep forth, and through the forest wind
Their solitary way;
Few words they speak, nor dare to slack
Their pace from mile to mile,
Till they have crossed the quaking marsh
And reached the lonely Isle.

The sun above the pine-trees showed
A bright and cheerful face;
And Ina looked for her abode,
The promised hiding-place;
She sought in vain, the Woodman smiled;
No threshold could be seen,
Nor roof, nor window;—all seemed wild
As it had ever been.

Advancing, you might guess an hour,
The front with such nice care
Is masked, "if house it be or bower,"
But in they entered are;
As shaggy as were wall and roof
With branches intertwined,
So smooth was all within, air-proof,
And delicately lined:

And hearth was there, and maple dish,
And cups in seemly rows,
And couch—all ready to a wish
For nurture or repose;
And Heaven doth to her virtue grant
That here she may abide
In solitude, with every want
By cautious love supplied.

No queen, before a shouting crowd,
Led on in bridal state,
E'er struggled with a heart so proud,
Entering her palace gate:
Rejoiced to bid the world farewell,
No saintly anchoress
E'er took possession of her cell
With deeper thankfulness.

"Father of all, upon thy care
And mercy am I thrown;
Be thou my safeguard!"—such her prayer
When she was left alone,
Kneeling amid the wilderness
When joy had passed away,
And smiles, fond efforts of distress
To hide what they betray!

The prayer is heard, the Saints have seen,
Diffused through form and face
Resolves devotedly serene;
That monumental grace
Of Faith, which doth all passions tame
That Reason *should* control;
And shows in the untrembling frame
A statue of the soul.

PART III

'TIS sung in ancient minstrelsy
That Phœbus wont to wear
The leaves of any pleasant tree
Around his golden hair;
Till Daphne, desperate with pursuit
Of his imperious love,
At her own prayer transformed, took root,
A laurel in the grove.

Then did the Penitent adorn
His brow with laurel green;
And 'mid his bright locks never shorn
No meaner leaf was seen;
And poets sage, through every age,
About their temples wound
The bay; and conquerors thanked the Gods,
With laurel chaplets crowned.

Into the mists of fabling Time
So far runs back the praise
Of Beauty, that disdains to climb
Along forbidden ways;
That scorns temptation; power defies
Where mutual love is not;
And to the tomb for rescue flies
When life would be a blot.

To this fair Votaress, a fate
More mild doth Heaven ordain
Upon her Island desolate;
And words, not breathed in vain,
Might tell what intercourse she found,
Her silence to endear;
What birds she tamed, what flowers the ground
Sent forth her peace to cheer.

To one mute Presence, above all,
Her soothed affections clung,
A picture on the cabin wall
By Russian usage hung—
The Mother-maid, whose countenance bright
With love abridged the day;
And, communed with by taper light,
Chased spectral fears away.

And oft, as either Guardian came,
The joy in that retreat
Might any common friendship shame,
So high their hearts would beat;
And to the lone Recluse, whate'er
They brought, each visiting
Was like the crowding of the year
With a new burst of spring.

But, when she of her Parents thought,
The pang was hard to bear;
And, if with all things not enwrought,
That trouble still is near.
Before her flight she had not dared
Their constancy to prove,
Too much the heroic Daughter feared
The weakness of their love.

Dark is the past to them, and dark
The future still must be,

Till pitying Saints conduct her bark
  Into a safer sea—
Or gentle Nature close her eyes,
  And set her Spirit free
From the altar of this sacrifice,
  In vestal purity.

Yet, when above the forest-glooms
  The white swans southward passed,
High as the pitch of their swift plumes
  Her fancy rode the blast;
And bore her toward the fields of France
  Her Father's native land,
To mingle in the rustic dance,
  The happiest of the band!

Of those belovèd fields she oft
  Had heard her Father tell
In phrase that now with echoes soft
  Haunted her lonely cell;
She saw the hereditary bowers,
  She heard the ancestral stream;
The Kremlin and its haughty towers
  Forgotten like a dream!

PART IV

THE ever-changing Moon had traced
  Twelve times her monthly round,
When through the unfrequented Waste
  Was heard a startling sound;
A shout thrice sent from one who chased
  At speed a wounded deer,
Bounding through branches interlaced,
  And where the wood was clear.

The fainting creature took the marsh,
  And toward the Island fled,
While plovers screamed with tumult harsh
  Above his antlered head;
This, Ina saw; and, pale with fear,
  Shrunk to her citadel;
The desperate deer rushed on, and near
  The tangled covert fell.

Across the marsh, the game in view,
  The Hunter followed fast,
Nor paused, till o'er the stag he blew
  A death-proclaiming blast;
Then, resting on her upright mind,
  Came forth the Maid—"In me
Behold," she said, "a stricken Hind
  Pursued by destiny!

From your deportment, Sir! I deem
  That you have worn a sword,
And will not hold in light esteem
  A suffering woman's word;
There is my covert, there perchance
  I might have lain concealed,
My fortunes hid, my countenance
  Not even to you revealed.

Tears might be shed, and I might pray,
  Crouching and terrified,
That what has been unveiled to day,
  You would in mystery hide;
But I will not defile with dust
  The knee that bends to adore
The God in heaven;—attend, be just;
  This ask I, and no more!

I speak not of the winter's cold,
  For summer's heat exchanged,
While I have lodged in this rough hold,
  From social life estranged;
Nor yet of trouble and alarms:
  High Heaven is my defence;
And every season has soft arms
  For injured Innocence.

From Moscow to the Wilderness
  It was my choice to come,
Lest virtue should be harbourless,
  And honour want a home;
And happy were I, if the Czar
  Retain his lawless will,
To end life here like this poor deer,
  Or a lamb on a green hill."

"Are you the Maid," the Stranger cried,
  "From Gallic parents sprung,
Whose vanishing was rumoured wide,
  Sad theme for every tongue;
Who foiled an Emperor's eager quest?
  You, Lady, forced to wear
These rude habiliments, and rest
  Your head in this dark lair!"

But wonder, pity, soon were quelled;
  And in her face and mien
The soul's pure brightness he beheld
  Without a veil between:
He loved, he hoped,—a holy flame
  Kindled 'mid rapturous tears;
The passion of a moment came
  As on the wings of years.

"Such bounty is no gift of chance,"
Exclaimed he; "righteous Heaven,
Preparing your deliverance,
To me the charge hath given.
The Czar full oft in words and deeds
Is stormy and self-willed;
But, when the Lady Catherine pleads,
His violence is stilled.

Leave open to my wish the course,
And I to her will go;
From that humane and heavenly source,
Good, only good, can flow."
Faint sanction given, the Cavalier
Was eager to depart,
Though question followed question, dear,
To the Maiden's filial heart.

Light was his step,—his hopes, more light,
Kept pace with his desires;
And the fifth morning gave him sight
Of Moscow's glittering spires.
He sued:—heart-smitten by the wrong,
To the lorn Fugitive
The Emperor sent a pledge as strong
As sovereign power could give.

O more than mighty change! If e'er
Amazement rose to pain,
And joy's excess produced a fear
Of something void and vain;
'Twas when the Parents, who had mourned
So long the lost as dead,
Beheld their only Child returned,
The household floor to tread.

Soon gratitude gave way to love
Within the Maiden's breast;
Delivered and Deliverer move
In bridal garments drest;
Meek Catherine had her own reward;
The Czar bestowed a dower;
And universal Moscow shared
The triumph of that hour.

Flowers strewed the ground; the nuptial feast
Was held with costly state;
And there, 'mid many a noble guest,
The Foster-parents sate;
Encouraged by the imperial eye,
They shrank not into shade;
Great was their bliss, the honour high
To them and nature paid! 1830.

THE EGYPTIAN MAID

OR,

THE ROMANCE OF THE WATER LILY

For the names and persons in the following poem, see the "History of the renowned Prince Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table;" for the rest the Author is answerable; only it may be proper to add, that the Lotus, with the bust of the Goddess appearing to rise out of the full-blown flower, was suggested by the beautiful work of ancient art, once included among the Townley Marbles, and now in the British Museum.

In addition to the short notice prefixed to this poem it may be worth while here to say that it rose out of a few words casually used in conversation by my nephew Henry Hutchinson. He was describing with great spirit the appearance and movement of a vessel which he seemed to admire more than any other he had ever seen, and said her name was the *Water Lily*. This plant has been my delight from my boyhood, as I have seen it floating on the lake; and that conversation put me upon constructing and composing the poem. Had I not heard those words it would never have been written. The form of the stanza is new, and is nothing but a repetition of the first five lines as they were thrown off, and is not perhaps well suited to narrative, and certainly would not have been trusted to had I thought at the beginning that the poem would have gone to such a length.

WHILE Merlin paced the Cornish sands,
Forth-looking toward the rocks of Scilly,
The pleased Enchanter was aware
Of a bright Ship that seemed to hang in air,
Yet was she work of mortal hands,
And took from men her name—THE WATER LILY.

Soft was the wind, that landward blew;
And, as the Moon, o'er some dark hill ascendant,
Grows from a little edge of light
To a full orb, this Pinnace bright
Became, as nearer to the coast she drew,
More glorious, with spread sail and streaming pendant.

Upon this wingèd Shape so fair
Sage Merlin gazed with admiration:

Her lineaments, thought he, surpass
Aught that was ever shown in magic glass;
Was ever built with patient care;
Or, at a touch, produced by happiest transformation.

Now, though a Mechanist, whose skill
Shames the degenerate grasp of modern science,
Grave Merlin (and belike the more
For practising occult and perilous lore)
Was subject to a freakish will
That sapped good thoughts, or scared them with defiance.

Provoked to envious spleen, he cast
An altered look upon the advancing Stranger
Whom he had hailed with joy, and cried,
"My Art shall help to tame her pride—"
Anon the breeze became a blast,
And the waves rose, and sky portended danger.

With thrilling word, and potent sign
Traced on the beach, his work the Sorcerer urges;
The clouds in blacker clouds are lost,
Like spiteful Fiends that vanish, crossed
By Fiends of aspect more malign;
And the winds roused the Deep with fiercer scourges.

But worthy of the name she bore
Was this Sea-flower, this buoyant Galley;
Supreme in loveliness and grace
Of motion, whether in the embrace
Of trusty anchorage, or scudding o'er
The main flood roughened into hill and valley.

Behold, how wantonly she laves
Her sides, the Wizard's craft confounding;
Like something out of Ocean sprung
To be for ever fresh and young,
Breasts the sea-flashes, and huge waves
Top-gallant high, rebounding and rebounding!

But Ocean under magic heaves,
And cannot spare the Thing he cherished:
Ah! what avails that she was fair,
Luminous, blithe, and debonair?
The storm has stripped her of her leaves;
The Lily floats no longer!—She hath perished.

Grieve for her,—she deserves no less;
So like, yet so unlike, a living Creature!
No heart had she, no busy brain;
Though loved, she could not love again;
Though pitied, *feel* her own distress;
Nor aught that troubles us, the fools of Nature.

Yet is there cause for gushing tears;
So richly was this Galley laden,
A fairer than herself she bore,
And, in her struggles, cast ashore;
A lovely One, who nothing hears
Of wind or wave—a meek and guileless Maiden.

Into a cave had Merlin fled
From mischief, caused by spells himself had muttered;
And while, repentant all too late,
In moody posture there he sate,
He heard a voice, and saw, with half-raised head,
A Visitant by whom these words were uttered;

"On Christian service this frail Bark
Sailed" (hear me, Merlin!) "under high protection,
Though on her prow a sign of heathen power
Was carved—a Goddess with a Lily flower,
The old Egyptian's emblematic mark
Of joy immortal and of pure affection.

Her course was for the British strand;
Her freight, it was a Damsel peerless;
God reigns above, and Spirits strong
May gather to avenge this wrong
Done to the Princess, and her Land
Which she in duty left, sad but not cheerless.

And to Caerleon's loftiest tower
Soon will the Knights of Arthur's Table
A cry of lamentation send;
And all will weep who there attend,
To grace that Stranger's bridal hour,
For whom the sea was made unnavigable.

Shame! should a Child of royal line
Die through the blindness of thy malice?"
Thus to the Necromancer spake
Nina, the Lady of the Lake,
A gentle Sorceress, and benign,
Who ne'er embittered any good man's chalice.

"What boots," continued she, "to mourn?
To expiate thy sin endeavour:
From the bleak isle where she is laid,
Fetched by our art, the Egyptian Maid
May yet to Arthur's court be borne
Cold as she is, ere life be fled for ever.

My pearly Boat, a shining Light,
That brought me down that sunless river,
Will bear me on from wave to wave,
And back with her to this sea-cave;—
Then Merlin! for a rapid flight
Through air, to thee my Charge will I deliver.

The very swiftest of thy cars
Must, when my part is done, be ready;
Meanwhile, for further guidance, look
Into thy own prophetic book;
And, if that fail, consult the Stars
To learn thy course; farewell! be prompt and steady."

This scarcely spoken, she again
Was seated in her gleaming shallop,
That, o'er the yet-distempered Deep,
Pursued its way with bird-like sweep,
Or like a steed, without a rein,
Urged o'er the wilderness in sportive gallop.

Soon did the gentle Nina reach
That Isle without a house or haven;
Landing, she found not what she sought,
Nor saw of wreck or ruin aught
But a carved Lotus cast upon the beach
By the fierce waves, a flower in marble graven.

Sad relique, but how fair the while!
For gently each from each retreating
With backward curve, the leaves revealed
The bosom half, and half concealed,
Of a Divinity, that seemed to smile
On Nina, as she passed, with hopeful greeting.

No quest was hers of vague desire,
Of tortured hope and purpose shaken;
Following the margin of a bay,
She spied the lonely Castaway,
Unmarred, unstripped of her attire,
But with closed eyes,—of breath and bloom forsaken.

Then Nina, stooping down, embraced,
With tenderness and mild emotion,
The Damsel, in that trance embound;
And, while she raised her from the ground,
And in the pearly shallop placed,
Sleep fell upon the air, and stilled the ocean.

The turmoil hushed, celestial springs
Of music opened, and there came a blending
Of fragrance, underived from earth,
With gleams that owed not to the sun their birth,
And that soft rustling of invisible wings
Which Angels make, on works of love descending.

And Nina heard a sweeter voice
Than if the Goddess of the flower had spoken:
"Thou hast achieved, fair Dame! what none
Less pure in spirit could have done;
Go, in thy enterprise rejoice!
Air, earth, sea, sky, and heaven, success betoken."

So cheered, she left that Island bleak,
A bare rock of the Scilly cluster;
And, as they traversed the smooth brine,
The self-illumined Brigantine
Shed, on the Slumberer's cold wan cheek
And pallid brow, a melancholy lustre.

Fleet was their course, and when they came
To the dim cavern, whence the river

Issued into the salt-sea flood,
Merlin, as fixed in thought he stood,
Was thus accosted by the Dame;
"Behold to thee my Charge I now deliver!

But where attends thy chariot—where?"—
Quoth Merlin, "Even as I was bidden,
So have I done; as trusty as thy barge
My vehicle shall prove—O precious Charge!
If this be sleep, how soft! if death, how fair!
Much have my books disclosed, but the end is hidden."

He spake; and gliding into view
Forth from the grotto's dimmest chamber
Came two mute Swans, whose plumes of dusky white
Changed, as the pair approached the light,
Drawing an ebon car, their hue
(Like clouds of sunset) into lucid amber.

Once more did gentle Nina lift
The Princess, passive to all changes:
The car received her:—then up-went
Into the ethereal element
The Birds with progress smooth and swift
As thought, when through bright regions memory ranges.

Sage Merlin, at the Slumberer's side,
Instructs the Swans their way to measure;
And soon Caerleon's towers appeared,
And notes of minstrelsy were heard
From rich pavilions spreading wide,
For some high day of long-expected pleasure.

Awe-stricken stood both Knights and Dames
Ere on firm ground the car alighted;
Eftsoons astonishment was past,
For in that face they saw the last
Last lingering look of clay, that tames
All pride; by which all happiness is blighted.

Said Merlin, "Mighty King, fair Lords,
Away with feast and tilt and tourney!
Ye saw, throughout this royal House,
Ye heard, a rocking marvellous
Of turrets, and a clash of swords
Self-shaken, as I closed my airy journey.

Lo! by a destiny well known
To mortals, joy is turned to sorrow;
This is the wished-for Bride, the Maid
Of Egypt, from a rock conveyed
Where she by shipwreck had been thrown,
Ill sight! but grief may vanish ere the morrow."

"Though vast thy power, thy words are weak,"
Exclaimed the King, "a mockery hateful;
Dutiful Child, her lot how hard!
Is this her piety's reward?
Those watery locks, that bloodless cheek!
O winds without remorse! O shore ungrateful!

Rich robes are fretted by the moth;
Towers, temples, fall by stroke of thunder;
Will that, or deeper thoughts, abate
A Father's sorrow for her fate?
He will repent him of his troth;
His brain will burn, his stout heart split asunder.

Alas! and I have caused this woe;
For, when my prowess from invading Neighbours
Had freed his Realm, he plighted word
That he would turn to Christ our Lord,
And his dear Daughter on a Knight bestow
Whom I should choose for love and matchless labours.

Her birth was heathen; but a fence
Of holy Angels round her hovered:
A Lady added to my court
So fair, of such divine report
And worship, seemed a recompence
For fifty kingdoms by my sword recovered.

Ask not for whom, O Champions true!
She was reserved by me her life's betrayer;
She who was meant to be a bride
Is now a corse: then put aside
Vain thoughts, and speed ye, with observance due
Of Christian rites, in Christian ground to lay her."

"The tomb," said Merlin, "may not close
Upon her yet, earth hide her beauty;
Not froward to thy sovereign will
Esteem me, Liege! if I, whose skill
Wafted her hither, interpose
To check this pious haste of erring duty.

My books command me to lay bare
The secret thou art bent on keeping:
Here must a high attest be given,
What Bridegroom was for her ordained by Heaven.
And in my glass significants there are
Of things that may to gladness turn this weeping.

For this, approaching, One by One,
Thy Knights must touch the cold hand of the Virgin;
So, for the favoured One, the Flower may bloom
Once more: but, if unchangeable her doom,
If life departed be for ever gone,
Some blest assurance, from this cloud emerging,

May teach him to bewail his loss;
Not with a grief that, like a vapour, rises
And melts; but grief devout that shall endure,
And a perpetual growth secure
Of purposes which no false thought shall cross,
A harvest of high hopes and noble enterprises."

"So be it," said the King;—"anon,
Here, where the Princess lies, begin the trial;
Knights each in order as ye stand
Step forth."—To touch the pallid hand
Sir Agravaine advanced; no sign he won
From Heaven or earth;—Sir Kaye had like denial.

Abashed, Sir Dinas turned away;
Even for Sir Percival was no disclosure;
Though he, devoutest of all Champions, ere
He reached that ebon car, the bier
Whereon diffused like snow the Damsel lay,
Full thrice had crossed himself in meek composure.

Imagine (but ye Saints! who can?)
How in still air the balance trembled—
The wishes, peradventure the despites
That overcame some not ungenerous Knights;
And all the thoughts that lengthened out a span
Of time to Lords and Ladies thus assembled.

What patient confidence was here!
And there how many bosoms panted!
While drawing toward the car Sir Gawaine, mailed
For tournament, his beaver vailed,
And softly touched; but, to his princely cheer
And high expectancy, no sign was granted.

Next, disencumbered of his harp,
Sir Tristram, dear to thousands as a brother,
Came to the proof, nor grieved that there ensued
No change;—the fair Izonda he had wooed
With love too true, a love with pangs too sharp,
From hope too distant, not to dread another.

Not so Sir Launcelot;—from Heaven's grace
A sign he craved, tired slave of vain contrition;
The royal Guinever looked passing glad
When his touch failed.—Next came Sir Galahad;
He paused, and stood entranced by that still face
Whose features he had seen in noontide vision.

For late, as near a murmuring stream
He rested 'mid an arbour green and shady,
Nina, the good Enchantress, shed
A light around his mossy bed;
And, at her call, a waking dream
Prefigured to his sense the Egyptian Lady.

Now, while his bright-haired front he bowed,
And stood, far-kenned by mantle furred with ermine,
As o'er the insensate Body hung
The enrapt, the beautiful, the young,

Belief sank deep into the crowd
That he the solemn issue would determine.

Nor deem it strange; the Youth had worn
That very mantle on a day of glory,
The day when he achieved that matchless feat,
The marvel of the PERILOUS SEAT,
Which whosoe'er approached of strength was shorn,
Though King or Knight the most renowned in story.

He touched with hesitating hand—
And lo! those Birds, far-famed through Love's dominions,
The Swans, in triumph clap their wings;
And their necks play, involved in rings,
Like sinless snakes in Eden's happy land;—
"Mine is she," cried the Knight;—again they clapped their pinions.

"Mine was she—mine she is, though dead,
And to her name my soul shall cleave in sorrow;"
Whereat, a tender twilight streak
Of colour dawned upon the Damsel's cheek;
And her lips, quickening with uncertain red,
Seemed from each other a faint warmth to borrow.

Deep was the awe, the rapture high,
Of love emboldened, hope with dread entwining,
When, to the mouth, relenting Death
Allowed a soft and flower-like breath,
Precursor to a timid sigh,
To lifted eyelids, and a doubtful shining.

In silence did King Arthur gaze
Upon the signs that pass away or tarry;
In silence watched the gentle strife
Of Nature leading back to life;
Then eased his soul at length by praise
Of God, and Heaven's pure Queen—the blissful Mary.

Then said he, "Take her to thy heart,
Sir Galahad! a treasure, that God giveth,
Bound by indissoluble ties to thee
Through mortal change and immortality;
Be happy and unenvied, thou who art
A goodly Knight that hath no peer that liveth!"

Not long the Nuptials were delayed;
And sage tradition still rehearses
The pomp, the glory of that hour
When toward the altar from her bower
King Arthur led the Egyptian Maid,
And Angels carolled these far-echoed verses;—

Who shrinks not from alliance
Of evil with good Powers,
To God proclaims defiance,
And mocks whom he adores.

A Ship to Christ devoted
From the Land of Nile did go;
Alas! the bright Ship floated,
An Idol at her prow.

By magic domination,
The Heaven-permitted vent
Of purblind mortal passion,
Was wrought her punishment.

The Flower the Form within it,
What served they in her need?
Her port she could not win it,
Nor from mishap be freed.

The tempest overcame her,
And she was seen no more;
But gently, gently blame her—
She cast a Pearl ashore.

The Maid to Jesu hearkened,
And kept to him her faith,
Till sense in death was darkened,
Or sleep akin to death.

But Angels round her pillow
Kept watch, a viewless band;
And, billow favouring billow,
She reached the destined strand.

Blest Pair! whate'er befall you,
Your faith in Him approve
Who from frail earth can call you
To bowers of endless love!

1830.

THE POET AND THE CAGED TURTLEDOVE

Written at Rydal Mount. This dove was one of a pair that had been given to my daughter by our excellent friend, Miss Jewsbury, who went to India with her husband, Mr. Fletcher, where she died of cholera. The dove survived its mate many years, and was killed, to our great sorrow, by a neighbour's cat that got in at the window and dragged it partly out of the cage. These verses were composed extempore, to the letter, in the Terrace Summer-house before spoken of. It was the habit of the bird to begin cooing and murmuring whenever it heard me making my verses.

As often as I murmur here
My half-formed melodies,
Straight from her osier mansion near,
The Turtledove replies:
Though silent as a leaf before,
The captive promptly coos;
Is it to teach her own soft lore,
Or second my weak Muse?

I rather think, the gentle Dove
Is murmuring a reproof,
Displeased that I from lays of love
Have dared to keep aloof;
That I, a Bard of hill and dale,
Have carolled, fancy free,
As if nor dove nor nightingale,
Had heart or voice for me.

If such thy meaning, O forbear,
Sweet Bird! to do me wrong;
Love, blessèd Love, is everywhere
The spirit of my song:
'Mid grove, and by the calm fireside,
Love animates my lyre—
That coo again!—'tis not to chide,
I feel, but to inspire. 1830.

PRESENTIMENTS

Written at Rydal Mount.

PRESENTIMENTS! they judge not right,
Who deem that ye from open light
Retire in fear of shame;
All *heaven-born* Instincts shun the touch
Of vulgar sense,—and, being such,
Such privilege ye claim.

The tear whose source I could not guess,
The deep sigh that seemed fatherless,
Were mine in early days;
And now, unforced by time to part
With fancy, I obey my heart,
And venture on your praise.

What though some busy foes to good,
Too potent over nerve and blood,
Lurk near you—and combine
To taint the health which ye infuse;
This hides not from the moral Muse
Your origin divine.

How oft from you, derided Powers!
Comes Faith that in auspicious hours
Builds castles, not of air:
Bodings unsanctioned by the will
Flow from your visionary skill,
And teach us to beware.

The bosom-weight, your stubborn gift,
That no philosophy can lift,
Shall vanish, if ye please,
Like morning mist: and, where it lay,
The spirits at your bidding play
In gaiety and ease.

Star-guided contemplations move
Through space, though calm, not raised above
Prognostics that ye rule;
The naked Indian of the wild,
And haply, too, the cradled Child,
Are pupils of your school.

But who can fathom your intents,
Number their signs or instruments?
A rainbow, a sunbeam,
A subtle smell that Spring unbinds,
Dead pause abrupt of midnight winds,
An echo, or a dream.

The laughter of the Christmas hearth
With sighs of self-exhausted mirth
Ye feelingly reprove;
And daily, in the conscious breast,
Your visitations are a test
And exercise of love.

When some great change gives boundless scope
To an exulting Nation's hope,
Oft, startled and made wise
By your low-breathed interpretings,
The simply-meek foretaste the springs
Of bitter contraries.

Ye daunt the proud array of war,
Pervade the lonely ocean far
As sail hath been unfurled;
For dancers in the festive hall
What ghastly partners hath your call
Fetched from the shadowy world.

'Tis said, that warnings ye dispense,
Emboldened by a keener sense;
That men have lived for whom,
With dread precision, ye made clear
The hour that in a distant year
Should knell them to the tomb.

Unwelcome insight! Yet there are,
Blest times when mystery is laid bare,
Truth shows a glorious face,
While on that isthmus which commands
The councils of both worlds, she stands,
Sage Spirits! by your grace.

God, who instructs the brutes to scent
All changes of the element,
Whose wisdom fixed the scale
Of natures, for our wants provides
By higher, sometimes humbler, guides,
When lights of reason fail. 1830.

"IN THESE FAIR VALES HATH MANY A TREE"

Engraven, during my absence in Italy, upon a brass plate inserted in the Stone.

In these fair vales hath many a Tree
At Wordsworth's suit been spared;
And from the builder's hand this Stone,
For some rude beauty of its own,
Was rescued by the Bard:
So let it rest; and time will come
When here the tender-hearted
May heave a gentle sigh for him,
As one of the departed. 1830.

ELEGIAC MUSINGS

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON HALL, THE SEAT OF THE LATE SIR G. H. BEAUMONT, BART.

These verses were in part composed on horseback during a storm, while I was on my way from Coleorton to Cambridge: they are alluded to elsewhere.

In these grounds stands the Parish Church, wherein is a mural monument bearing an Inscription which, in deference to the earnest request of the deceased, is confined to name, dates, and these words:—"Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!"

With copious eulogy in prose or rhyme
Graven on the tomb we struggle against Time,
Alas, how feebly! but our feelings rise
And still we struggle when a good man dies:
Such offering Beaumont dreaded and forbade,
A spirit meek in self-abasement clad.
Yet *here* at least—though few have numbered days
That shunned so modestly the light of praise—
His graceful manners, and the temperate ray
Of that arch fancy which would round him play,
Brightening a converse never known to swerve
From courtesy and delicate reserve;
That sense, the bland philosophy of life,
Which checked discussion ere it warmed to strife—
Those rare accomplishments, and varied powers,
Might have their record among sylvan bowers.
Oh, fled for ever! vanished like a blast
That shook the leaves in myriads as it passed;—
Gone from this world of earth, air, sea, and sky,
From all its spirit-moving imagery,
Intensely studied with a painter's eye,
A poet's heart; and, for congenial view,
Portrayed with happiest pencil, not untrue
To common recognitions while the line
Flowed in a course of sympathy divine;—

Oh! severed, too abruptly, from delights
That all the seasons shared with equal rights;—
Rapt in the grace of undismantled age,
From soul-felt music, and the treasured page
Lit by that evening lamp which loved to shed
Its mellow lustre round thy honoured head;
While Friends beheld thee give with eye, voice, mien,
More than theatric force to Shakspeare's scene;—
If thou hast heard me—if thy Spirit know
Aught of these bowers and whence their pleasures flow;
If things in our remembrance held so dear,
And thoughts and projects fondly cherished here,
To thy exalted nature only seem
Time's vanities, light fragments of earth's dream—
Rebuke us not!—The mandate is obeyed
That said, "Let praise be mute where I am laid;"
The holier deprecation, given in trust
To the cold marble, waits upon thy dust;
Yet have we found how slowly genuine grief
From *silent* admiration wins relief.
Too long abashed thy Name is like a rose
That doth "within itself its sweetness close;"
A drooping daisy changed into a cup
In which her bright-eyed beauty is shut up.
Within these groves, where still are flitting by
Shades of the Past, oft noticed with a sigh,
Shall stand a votive Tablet, haply free,
When towers and temples fall, to speak of Thee!
If sculptured emblems of our mortal doom
Recall not there the wisdom of the Tomb,
Green ivy risen from out the cheerful earth,
Will fringe the lettered stone; and herbs spring forth,
Whose fragrance, by soft dews and rain unbound,
Shall penetrate the heart without a wound;
While truth and love their purposes fulfil,
Commemorating genius, talent, skill,
That could not lie concealed where Thou wert known;
Thy virtues *He* must judge, and He alone,
The God upon whose mercy they are thrown. *Nov.* 1830.

"CHATSWORTH! THY STATELY MANSION, AND THE PRIDE"

I have reason to remember the day that gave rise to this Sonnet, the 6th of November 1830. Having undertaken, a great feat for me, to ride my daughter's pony from Westmoreland to Cambridge, that she might have the use of it while on a visit to her uncle at Trinity Lodge, on my way from Bakewell to Matlock I turned aside to Chatsworth, and had scarcely gratified my curiosity by the sight of that celebrated place before there came on a severe storm of wind and rain which continued till I reached Derby, both man and pony in a pitiable plight. For myself, I went to bed at noon-day. In the course of that journey I had to encounter a storm, worse if possible, in which the pony could (or would) only make his way slantwise. I mention this merely to add that notwithstanding this battering I composed, on horseback, the lines to the memory of Sir George Beaumont, suggested during my recent visit to Coleorton.

CHATSWORTH! thy stately mansion, and the pride
Of thy domain, strange contrast do present
To house and home in many a craggy rent
Of the wild Peak; where new-born waters glide
Through fields whose thrifty occupants abide
As in a dear and chosen banishment,
With every semblance of entire content;
So kind is simple Nature, fairly tried!
Yet He whose heart in childhood gave her troth
To pastoral dales, thin-set with modest farms,
May learn, if judgment strengthen with his growth,
That, not for Fancy only, pomp hath charms;
And, strenuous to protect from lawless harms
The extremes of favoured life, may honour both. 1830.

TO THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT

Painted at Rydal Mount, by W. Pickersgill, Esq., for St. John's College, Cambridge.

The six last lines of this Sonnet are not written for poetical effect, but as a matter of fact, which, in more than one instance, could not escape my notice in the servants of the house.

Go, faithful Portrait! and where long hath knelt
Margaret, the Saintly Foundress, take thy place;
And, if Time spare the colours for the grace
Which to the work surpassing skill hath dealt,
Thou, on thy rock reclined, though kingdoms melt
And states be torn up by the roots, wilt seem
To breathe in rural peace, to hear the stream,
And think and feel as once the Poet felt.
Whate'er thy fate, those features have not grown
Unrecognised through many a household tear
More prompt, more glad, to fall than drops of dew
By morning shed around a flower half-blown;
Tears of delight, that testified how true
To life thou art, and, in thy truth, how dear! 1830.

THE PRIMROSE OF THE ROCK

Written at Rydal Mount. The Rock stands on the right hand a little way leading up the middle road from Rydal to Grasmere. We have been in the habit of calling it the glow-worm rock from the number of glow-worms we have often seen hanging on it as described. The tuft of primrose has, I fear, been washed away by the heavy rains.

A Rock there is whose homely front
The passing traveller slights;
Yet there the glow worms hang their lamps,
Like stars, at various heights;
And one coy Primrose to that Rock
The vernal breeze invites.

What hideous warfare hath been waged,
What kingdoms overthrown,
Since first I spied that Primrose-tuft
And marked it for my own;
A lasting link in Nature's chain
From highest heaven let down!

The flowers, still faithful to the stems,
Their fellowship renew;
The stems are faithful to the root,
That worketh out of view;
And to the rock the root adheres
In every fibre true.

Close clings to earth the living rock,
Though threatening still to fall;
The earth is constant to her sphere;
And God upholds them all:
So blooms this lonely Plant, nor dreads
Her annual funeral.

* * * *

Here closed the meditative strain;
But air breathed soft that day,
The hoary mountain-heights were cheered,
The sunny vale looked gay;
And to the Primrose of the Rock
I gave this after-lay.

I sang—Let myriads of bright flowers,
Like Thee, in field and grove
Revive unenvied;—mightier far,
Than tremblings that reprove
Our vernal tendencies to hope,
Is God's redeeming love;

That love which changed—for wan disease,
For sorrow that had bent
O'er hopeless dust, for withered age—
Their moral element,
And turned the thistles of a curse
To types beneficent.

Sin-blighted though we are, we too,
The reasoning Sons of Men,
From one oblivious winter called
Shall rise, and breathe again;
And in eternal summer lose
Our threescore years and ten.

To humbleness of heart descends
This prescience from on high,
The faith that elevates the just,
Before and when they die;
And makes each soul a separate heaven,
A court for Deity. 1831.

YARROW REVISITED, AND OTHER POEMS

COMPOSED (TWO EXCEPTED) DURING A TOUR IN SCOTLAND AND ON THE ENGLISH BORDER, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1831.

In the autumn of 1831, my daughter and I set off from Rydal to visit Sir Walter Scott before his departure for Italy. This journey had been delayed by an inflammation in my eyes till we found that the time appointed for his leaving home would be too near for him to receive us without considerable inconvenience. Nevertheless we proceeded and reached Abbotsford on Monday. I was then scarcely able to lift up my eyes to the light. How sadly changed did I find him from the man I had seen so healthy, gay, and hopeful, a few years before, when he said at the inn at Paterdale, in my presence, his daughter Anne also being there, with Mr. Lockhart, my own wife and daughter, and Mr. Quillinan,—"I mean to live till I am *eighty*, and shall write as long as I live." But to return to Abbotsford, the inmates and guests we found there were Sir Walter, Major Scott, Anne Scott, and Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart, Mr. Liddell, his Lady and Brother, and Mr. Allan the painter, and Mr. Laidlow, a very old friend of Sir Walter's. One of Burns's sons, an officer in the Indian service, had left the house a day or two before, and had kindly expressed his regret that he could not await my arrival, a regret that I may truly say was mutual. In the evening, Mr. and Mrs. Liddell sang, and Mrs. Lockhart chanted old ballads to her harp; and Mr. Allan, hanging over the back of a chair, told and acted odd stories in a humorous way. With this exhibition and his daughter's singing, Sir Walter was much amused, as indeed were we all as far as circumstances would allow. But what is most worthy of mention is the admirable demeanour of Major Scott during the following evening, when the Liddells were gone and only ourselves and Mr. Allan were present. He had much to suffer from the sight of his father's infirmities and from the great change that was about to take place at the residence he had built, and where he had long lived in so much prosperity and happiness. But what struck me most was the patient kindness with which he supported himself under the many fretful expressions that his sister Anne addressed to him or uttered in his hearing. She, poor thing, as mistress of that house, had been subject, after her mother's death, to a heavier load of care and responsibility and greater sacrifices of time than one of such a constitution of body and mind was able to bear. Of this, Dora and I were made so sensible, that, as soon as we had crossed the Tweed on our departure, we gave vent at the same moment to our apprehensions that her brain would fail and she would go out of her mind, or that she would sink under the trials she had passed and those which awaited her. On Tuesday morning Sir Walter Scott accompanied us and most of the party to Newark Castle on the Yarrow. When we alighted from the carriages he walked pretty stoutly, and had great pleasure in revisiting those his favourite haunts. Of that excursion the verses "Yarrow revisited" are a memorial. Notwithstanding the romance that pervades Sir Walter's works and attaches to many of his habits, there is too much pressure of fact for these verses to harmonise as much as I could wish with other poems. On our return in the afternoon we had to cross the Tweed directly opposite Abbotsford. The wheels of our carriage grated upon the pebbles in the bed of the stream, that there flows somewhat rapidly; a rich but sad light of rather a purple than a golden hue was spread over the Eildon hills at that moment; and, thinking it probable that it might be the last time Sir Walter would cross the stream, I was not a little moved, and expressed some of my feelings in the sonnet beginning—"A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain." At noon on Thursday we left Abbotsford, and in the morning of that day Sir Walter and I had a serious conversation *tête-à-tête*, when he spoke with gratitude of the happy life which upon the whole he had led. He had written in my daughter's Album, before he came into the breakfast-room that morning, a few stanzas addressed to her, and, while putting the book into her hand, in his own study, standing by his desk, he said to her in my presence—"I should not have done anything of this kind but for your father's sake: they are probably the last verses I shall ever write." They show how much his mind was impaired, not by the strain of thought but by the execution, some of the lines being imperfect, and one stanza wanting corresponding rhymes: one letter, the initial S, had been omitted in the spelling of his own name. In this interview also it was that, upon my expressing a hope of his health being benefited by the climate of the country to which he was going, and by the interest he would take in the classic remembrances of Italy, he made use of the quotation from "Yarrow unvisited" as recorded by me in the "Musings at Aquapendente" six years afterwards. Mr. Lockhart has mentioned in his Life of him what I heard from several quarters while abroad, both at Rome and elsewhere, that little seemed to interest him but what he could collect or heard of the fugitive Stuarts and their adherents who had followed them into exile. Both the "Yarrow revisited" and the "Sonnet" were sent him before his departure from England. Some further particulars of the conversations which occurred during this visit I should have set down had they not been already accurately recorded by Mr. Lockhart. I first became acquainted with this great and amiable man—Sir Walter Scott—in the year 1803, when my sister and I, making a tour in Scotland, were hospitably received by him in Lasswade upon the banks of the Esk, where he was then living. We saw a good deal of him in the course of the following week: the particulars are given in my sister's Journal of that tour.

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS, Esq.,

AS A TESTIMONY OF FRIENDSHIP, AND
ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF INTELLECTUAL OBLIGATIONS,
THESE MEMORIALS ARE AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED

RYDAL MOUNT, *Dec.* 11, 1834.

I

The following Stanzas are a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott and other Friends visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford, for Naples.

The title *Yarrow Revisited* will stand in no need of explanation for Readers acquainted with the Author's previous poems suggested by that celebrated Stream.

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks, a "winsome Marrow,"
Was but an Infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;
Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation:
No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of youth
With freaks of graceful folly,—
Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing
If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps—a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O SCOTT! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes;
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
For mild Sorento's breezy waves;
May classic Fancy, linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid,
Preserve thy heart from sinking!

Oh! while they minister to thee,
Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow Age
With Strength, her venturous brother;
And Tiber, and each brook and rill
Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
Nor lose one ray of glory!

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
Wherever they invite Thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
Such looks of love and honour
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
When first I gazed upon her;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
The holy and the tender.

And what, for this frail world, were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self?
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localised Romance
Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
For fanciful dejections:
Ah, no! the visions of the past
Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is—our changeful Life,
With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centred;
Who through the silent portal arch
Of mouldering Newark entered;
And clomb the winding stair that once
Too timidly was mounted
By the "last Minstrel," (not the last!)
Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream!
Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future Bards should chant
For simple hearts thy beauty;
To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine!

II

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM ABBOTSFORD, FOR NAPLES

A TROUBLE, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope!

III

A PLACE OF BURIAL IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

Similar places for burial are not unfrequent in Scotland. The one that suggested this Sonnet lies on the banks of a small stream called the Wauchope that flows into the Esk near Langholme. Mickle, who, as it appears from his poem on Sir Martin, was not without genuine poetic feelings, was born and passed his boyhood in this neighbourhood, under his father, who was a minister of the Scotch Kirk. The Esk, both above and below Langholme, flows through a beautiful country, and the two streams of the Wauchope and the Ewes, which join it near that place, are such as a pastoral poet would delight in.

PART fenced by man, part by a rugged steep
That curbs a foaming brook, a Grave-yard lies;
The hare's best couching-place for fearless sleep;
Which moonlit elves, far seen by credulous eyes,
Enter in dance. Of church, or sabbath ties,

No vestige now remains; yet thither creep
Bereft Ones, and in lowly anguish weep
Their prayers out to the wind and naked skies.
Proud tomb is none; but rudely-sculptured knights,
By humble choice of plain old times, are seen
Level with earth, among the hillocks green:
Union not sad, when sunny daybreak smites
The spangled turf, and neighbouring thickets ring
With *jubilate* from the choirs of spring!

IV

ON THE SIGHT OF A MANSE IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

The manses in Scotland and the gardens and grounds about them have seldom that attractive appearance which is common about our English parsonages, even when the clergyman's income falls below the average of the Scotch minister's. This is not merely owing to the one country being poor in comparison with the other, but arises rather out of the equality of their benefices, so that no one has enough to spare for decorations that might serve as an example for others; whereas, with us, the taste of the richer incumbent extends its influence more or less to the poorest. After all, in these observations the surface only of the matter is touched. I once heard a conversation in which the Roman Catholic Religion was decried on account of its abuses. "You cannot deny, however," said a lady of the party, repeating an expression used by Charles II., "that it is the religion of a gentleman." It may be left to the Scotch themselves to determine how far this observation applies to their Kirk, while it cannot be denied, if it is wanting in that characteristic quality, the aspect of common life, so far as concerns its beauty, must suffer. Sincere christian piety may be thought not to stand in need of refinement or studied ornament; but assuredly it is ever ready to adopt them, when they fall within its notice, as means allow; and this observation applies not only to manners, but to everything a christian (truly so in spirit) cultivates and gathers round him, however humble his social condition.

SAY, ye far-travelled clouds, far-seeing hills—
Among the happiest-looking homes of men
Scattered all Britain over, through deep glen,
On airy upland, and by forest rills,
And o'er wide plains cheered by the lark that trills
His sky-born warblings—does aught meet your ken
More fit to animate the Poet's pen,
Aught that more surely by its aspect fills
Pure minds with sinless envy, than the Abode
Of the good Priest: who, faithful through all hours
To his high charge, and truly serving God,
Has yet a heart and hand for trees and flowers,
Enjoys the walks his predecessors trod,
Nor covets lineal rights in lands and towers.

V

COMPOSED IN ROSLIN CHAPEL DURING A STORM

We were detained by incessant rain and storm at the small inn near Roslin Chapel, and I passed a great part of the day pacing to and fro in this beautiful structure, which, though not used fo public service, is not allowed to go to ruin. Here this Sonnet was composed. If it has at al done justice to the feeling which the place an the storm raging without inspired, I was as prisoner. A painter delineating the interior o the chapel and its minute features under suc circumstances would have, no doubt, found hi time agreeably shortened. But the movement of the mind must be more free while dealing wit words than with lines and colours; such at leas was then and has been on many other occasion my belief, and, as it is allotted to few to follo both arts with success, I am grateful to my ow calling for this and a thousand other recommendations which are denied to that of the painter.

THE wind is now thy organist;—a clank
(We know not whence) ministers for a bel
To mark some change of service. As th swell
Of music reached its height, and even whe sank
The notes, in prelude, ROSLIN! to a blan
Of silence, how it thrilled thy sumptuou roof,
Pillars, and arches,—not in vain time proof,

Though Christian rites be wanting! From what bank
Came those live herbs? by what hand were they sown
Where dew falls not, where rain-drops seem unknown?
Yet in the Temple they a friendly niche
Share with their sculptured fellows, that, green-grown,
Copy their beauty more and more, and preach,
Though mute, of all things blending into one.

VI

THE TROSACHS

As recorded in my sister's Journal, I had first seen the Trosachs in her and Coleridge's company. The sentiment that runs through this Sonnet was natural to the season in which I again saw this beautiful spot; but this and some other sonnets that follow were coloured by the remembrance of my recent visit to Sir Walter Scott, and the melancholy errand on which he was going.

THERE'S not a nook within this solemn Pass,
But were an apt confessional for One
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

VII

THE pibroch's note, discountenanced or mute;
The Roman kilt, degraded to a toy
Of quaint apparel for a half-spoilt boy;
The target mouldering like ungathered fruit;
The smoking steam-boat eager in pursuit,
As eagerly pursued; the umbrella spread
To weather-fend the Celtic herdsman's head—
All speak of manners withering to the root,
And of old honours, too, and passions high:
Then may we ask, though pleased that thought should range
Among the conquests of civility,
Survives imagination—to the change
Superior? Help to virtue does she give?
If not, O Mortals, better cease to live!

VIII

COMPOSED IN THE GLEN OF LOCH ETIVE

"That make the Patriot-spirit." It was mortifying to have frequent occasions to observe the bitter hatred of the lower orders of the Highlanders to their superiors; love of country seemed to have passed into its opposite. Emigration was the only relief looked to with hope.

"THIS Land of Rainbows spanning glens whose walls,
Rock-built, are hung with rainbow-coloured mists—
Of far-stretched Meres whose salt flood never rests—
Of tuneful Caves and playful Waterfalls—
Of Mountains varying momently their crests—
Proud be this Land! whose poorest huts are halls
Where Fancy entertains becoming guests;
While native song the heroic Past recalls."
Thus, in the net of her own wishes caught,
The Muse exclaimed; but Story now must hide
Her trophies, Fancy crouch; the course of pride
Has been diverted, other lessons taught,
That make the Patriot-spirit bow her head
Where the all-conquering Roman feared to tread.

IX

EAGLES

COMPOSED AT DUNOLLIE CASTLE IN THE BAY OF OBAN

"The last I saw was on the wing," off the promontory of Fairhead, county of Antrim. I mention this because, though my tour in Ireland with Mr. Marshall and his son was made many years ago, this allusion to the eagle is the only image supplied by it to the poetry I have since written. We travelled through that country in October, and to the shortness of the days and the speed with which we travelled (in a carriage and four) may be ascribed this want of notices, in my verse, of a country so interesting. The deficiency I am somewhat ashamed of, and it is the more remarkable as contrasted with my Scotch and Continental tours, of which are to be found in this volume so many memorials.

Dishonoured Rock and Ruin! that, by law
Tyrannic, keep the Bird of Jove embarred
Like a lone criminal whose life is spared.
Vexed is he, and screams loud. The last I saw
Was on the wing; stooping, he struck with awe
Man, bird, and beast; then, with a consort paired,
From a bold headland, their lóved aery's guard,
Flew high above Atlantic waves, to draw
Light from the fountain of the setting sun.
Such was this Prisoner once; and, when his plumes
The sea-blast ruffles as the storm comes on,
Then, for a moment, he, in spirit, resumes
His rank 'mong freeborn creatures that live free,
His power, his beauty, and his majesty.

X

IN THE SOUND OF MULL

Touring late in the season in Scotland is an uncertain speculation. We were detained a week by rain at Bunaw on Loch Etive in a vain hope that the weather would clear up and allow me to show my daughter the beauties of Glencoe. Two days we were at the isle of Mull, on a visit to Major Campbell; but it rained incessantly, and we were obliged to give up our intention of going to Staffa. The rain pursued us to Tyndrum, where the Eleventh Sonnet was composed in a storm.

Tradition, be thou mute! Oblivion, throw
Thy veil in mercy o'er the records, hung
Round strath and mountain, stamped by the ancient tongue
On rock and ruin darkening as we go,—
Spots where a word, ghostlike, survives to show
What crimes from hate, or desperate love, have sprung;
From honour misconceived, or fancied wrong,
What feuds, not quenched but fed by mutual woe.
Yet, though a wild vindictive Race, untamed
By civil arts and labours of the pen,
Could gentleness be scorned by those fierce Men,
Who, to spread wide the reverence they claimed
For patriarchal occupations, named
Yon towering Peaks, "Shepherds of Etive Glen?"[1]

XI

SUGGESTED AT TYNDRUM IN A STORM

Enough of garlands, of the Arcadian crook,
And all that Greece and Italy have sung
Of Swains reposing myrtle groves among!
Ours couch on naked rocks,—will cross a brook
Swoln with chill rains, nor ever cast a look
This way or that, or give it even a thought
More than by smoothest pathway may be brought
Into a vacant mind. Can written book
Teach what *they* learn? Up, hardy Mountaineer!
And guide the Bard, ambitious to be One
Of Nature's privy council, as thou art,
On cloud-sequestered heights, that see and hear
To what dread Powers He delegates his part
On earth, who works in the heaven of heavens, alone.

XII

THE EARL OF BREADALBANE'S RUINED MANSION AND FAMILY BURIAL-PLACE, NEAR KILLIN

Well sang the Bard who called the grave, in strains

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[1] In Gaelic, *Buachaill Eite.*

Thoughtful and sad, the "narrow house." No style
Of fond sepulchral flattery can beguile
Grief of her sting; nor cheat, where he detains
The sleeping dust, stern Death. How reconcile
With truth, or with each other, decked remains
Of a once warm Abode, and that *new* Pile,
For the departed, built with curious pains
And mausolean pomp? Yet here they stand
Together,—'mid trim walks and artful bowers,
To be looked down upon by ancient hills,
That, for the living and the dead, demand
And prompt a harmony of genuine powers;
Concord that elevates the mind, and stills.

XIII

"REST AND BE THANKFUL!"

AT THE HEAD OF GLENCROE

DOUBLING and doubling with laborious walk,
Who, that has gained at length the wished-for Height,
This brief this simple wayside Call can slight,
And rests not thankful? Whether cheered by talk
With some loved friend, or by the unseen hawk
Whistling to clouds and sky-born streams that shine,
At the sun's outbreak, as with light divine,
Ere they descend to nourish root and stalk
Of valley flowers. Nor, while the limbs repose,
Will we forget that, as the fowl can keep
Absolute stillness, poised aloft in air,
And fishes front, unmoved, the torrent's sweep,—
So may the Soul, through powers that Faith bestows,
Win rest, and ease, and peace, with bliss that Angels share.

XIV

HIGHLAND HUT

SEE what gay wild flowers deck this earth-built Cot,
Whose smoke, forth-issuing whence and how it may,
Shines in the greeting of the sun's first ray
Like wreaths of vapour without stain or blot.
The limpid mountain rill avoids it not;
And why shouldst thou?—If rightly trained and bred,
Humanity is humble, finds no spot
Which her Heaven-guided feet refuse to tread.
The walls are cracked, sunk is the flowery roof,
Undressed the pathway leading to the door;
But love, as Nature loves, the lonely Poor;
Search, for their worth, some gentle heart wrong-proof,
Meek, patient, kind, and, were its trials fewer,
Belike less happy.—Stand no more aloof![1]

XV

THE BROWNIE

Upon a small island, not far from the head of Loch Lomond, are some remains of an ancient building, which was for several years the abode of a solitary Individual, one of the last survivors of the clan of Macfarlane, once powerful in that neighbourhood. Passing along the shore opposite this island in the year 1814, the Author learned these particulars, and that this person then living there had acquired the appellation of "The Brownie." See "The Brownie's Cell," p. 534, to which the following is a sequel.

"How disappeared he?" Ask the newt and toad;
Ask of his fellow-men, and they will tell
How he was found, cold as an icicle,
Under an arch of that forlorn abode;
Where he, unpropped, and by the gathering flood
Of years hemmed round, had dwelt, prepared to try
Privation's worst extremities, and die
With no one near save the omnipresent God.

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[1] See Note.

Verily so to live was an awful choice—
A choice that wears the aspect of a doom;
But in the mould of mercy all is cast
For Souls familiar with the eternal Voice;
And this forgotten Taper to the last
Drove from itself, we trust, all frightful gloom.

XVI

TO THE PLANET VENUS, AN EVENING STAR

COMPOSED AT LOCH LOMOND

Though joy attend Thee orient at the birth
Of dawn, it cheers the lofty spirit most
To watch thy course when Day-light, fled from earth,
In the grey sky hath left his lingering Ghost,
Perplexed as if between a splendour lost
And splendour slowly mustering. Since the Sun,
The absolute, the world-absorbing One,
Relinquished half his empire to the host
Emboldened by thy guidance, holy Star,
Holy as princely—who that looks on thee,
Touching, as now, in thy humility
The mountain borders of this seat of care,
Can question that thy countenance is bright,
Celestial Power, as much with love as light?

XVII

BOTHWELL CASTLE

PASSED UNSEEN, ON ACCOUNT OF STORMY WEATHER

In my Sister's Journal is an account of Bothwell Castle as it appeared to us at that time.

Immured in Bothwell's towers, at times the Brave
(So beautiful is Clyde) forgot to mourn
The liberty they lost at Bannockburn.
Once on those steeps *I* roamed[1] at large, and have
In mind the landscape, as if still in sight;
The river glides, the woods before me wave;
Then why repine that now in vain I crave
Needless renewal of an old delight?
Better to thank a dear and long-past day
For joy its sunny hours were free to give
Than blame the present, that our wish hath crost.
Memory, like sleep, hath powers which dreams obey,
Dreams, vivid dreams, that are not fugitive:
How little that she cherishes is lost!

XVIII

PICTURE OF DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN, AT HAMILTON PALACE

Amid a fertile region green with wood
And fresh with rivers, well did it become
The ducal Owner, in his palace-home
To naturalise this tawny Lion brood;
Children of Art, that claim strange brotherhood
(Couched in their den) with those that roam at large
Over the burning wilderness, and charge
The wind with terror while they roar for food.
Satiate are *these;* and stilled to eye and ear;
Hence, while we gaze, a more enduring fear!
Yet is the Prophet calm, nor would the cave
Daunt him—if his Companions, now bedrowsed
Outstretched and listless, were by hunger roused:
Man placed him here, and God, he knows, can save.

XIX

THE AVON

A FEEDER OF THE ANNAN

"Yet is it one that other rivulets bear." There is the Shakspeare Avon, the Bristol Avon; the one that flows by Salisbury, and a small river in Wales, I believe, bear the name; Avon being in the ancient tongue the general name for river.

Avon—a precious, an immortal name!
Yet is it one that other rivulets bear
Like this unheard-of, and their channels wear
Like this contented, though unknown to Fame:
For great and sacred is the modest claim

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[1] See Note.

Of Streams to Nature's love, where'er they flow;
And ne'er did Genius slight them, as they go,
Tree, flower, and green herb, feeding without blame.
But Praise can waste her voice on work of tears,
Anguish, and death: full oft where innocent blood
Has mixed its current with the limpid flood,
Her heaven-offending trophies Glory rears:
Never for like distinction may the good
Shrink from *thy* name, pure Rill, with unpleased ears.

XX

SUGGESTED BY A VIEW FROM AN EMINENCE IN INGLEWOOD FOREST

The extensive forest of Inglewood has been enclosed within my memory. I was well acquainted with it in its ancient state. The Hart's-horn tree mentioned in the next Sonnet was one of its remarkable objects, as well as another tree that grew upon an eminence not far from Penrith: it was single and conspicuous; and being of a round shape, though it was universally known to be a Sycamore, it was always called the "*Round Thorn*," so difficult is it to chain fancy down to fact.

The forest huge of ancient Caledon
Is but a name, no more is Inglewood,
That swept from hill to hill, from flood to flood:
On her last thorn the nightly moon has shone;
Yet still, though unappropriate Wild be none,
Fair parks spread wide where Adam Bell might deign
With Clym o' the Clough, were they alive again,
To kill for merry feast their venison.
Nor wants the holy Abbot's gliding Shade
His church with monumental wreck bestrown;
The feudal Warrior-chief, a Ghost unlaid,
Hath still his castle, though a skeleton,
That he may watch by night, and lessons con
Of power that perishes, and rights that fade.

XXI

HART'S-HORN TREE, NEAR PENRITH

Here stood an Oak, that long had borne affixed
To his huge trunk, or, with more subtle art,
Among its withering topmost branches mixed,
The palmy antlers of a hunted Hart,
Whom the Dog Hercules pursued—his part
Each desperately sustaining, till at last
Both sank and died, the life-veins of the chased
And chaser bursting here with one dire smart.
Mutual the victory, mutual the defeat!
High was the trophy hung with pitiless pride;
Say, rather, with that generous sympathy
That wants not, even in rudest breasts, a seat;
And, for this feeling's sake, let no one chide
Verse that would guard thy memory, Hart's-horn Tree![1]

XXII

FANCY AND TRADITION

The Lovers took within this ancient grove
Their last embrace; beside those crystal springs
The Hermit saw the Angel spread his wings
For instant flight; the Sage in yon alcove
Sate musing; on that hill the Bard would rove,
Not mute, where now the linnet only sings:
Thus everywhere to truth Tradition clings,
Or Fancy localises Powers we love.
Were only History licensed to take note
Of things gone by, her meagre monuments
Would ill suffice for persons and events:
There is an ampler page for man to quote,
A readier book of manifold contents,
Studied alike in palace and in cot.

XXIII

COUNTESS'S PILLAR

Suggested by the recollection of Julian's Bower and other traditions connected with this ancient forest.

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[1] See Note.

On the roadside between Penrith and Appleby, there stands a pillar with the following inscription:—

"This Pillar was erected, in the year 1656, by Anne Countess Dowager of Pembroke, &c., for a memorial of her last parting with her pious mother, Margaret Countess Dowager of Cumberland, on the 2d of April, 1616; in memory whereof she hath left an annuity of 4*l.* to be distributed to the poor of the parish of Brougham, every 2d day of April for ever, upon the stone table placed hard by. Laus Deo!"

WHILE the Poor gather round, till the end of time
May this bright flower of Charity display
Its bloom, unfolding at the appointed day;
Flower than the loveliest of the vernal prime
Lovelier—transplanted from heaven's purest clime!
"Charity never faileth:" on that creed,
More than on written testament or deed,
The pious Lady built with hope sublime.
Alms on this stone to be dealt out, *for ever!*
"LAUS DEO." Many a Stranger passing by
Has with that Parting mixed a filial sigh,
Blest its humane Memorial's fond endeavour;
And, fastening on those lines an eye tear-glazed,
Has ended, though no Clerk, with "God be praised!"

XXIV

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

FROM THE ROMAN STATION AT OLD PENRITH

HOW profitless the relics that we cull,
Troubling the last holds of ambitious Rome,
Unless they chasten fancies that presume
Too high, or idle agitations lull!
Of the world's flatteries if the brain be full,
To have no seat for thought were better doom,
Like this old helmet, or the eyeless skull
Of him who gloried in its nodding plume.
Heaven out of view, our wishes what are they?
Our fond regrets tenacious in their grasp?
The Sage's theory? the Poet's lay?
Mere Fibulæ without a robe to clasp;
Obsolete lamps, whose light no time recalls;
Urns without ashes, tearless lacrymals!

XXV

APOLOGY FOR THE FOREGOING POEMS

NO more: the end is sudden and abrupt,
Abrupt—as without preconceived design
Was the beginning; yet the several Lays
Have moved in order, to each other bound
By a continuous and acknowledged tie
Though unapparent—like those Shapes distinct
That yet survive ensculptured on the walls
Of palaces, or temples, 'mid the wreck
Of famed Persepolis; each following each,
As might beseem a stately embassy,
In set array; these bearing in their hands
Ensign of civil power, weapon of war,
Or gift to be presented at the throne
Of the Great King; and others, as they go
In priestly vest, with holy offerings charged,
Or leading victims drest for sacrifice.
Nor will the Power we serve, that sacred Power,
The Spirit of humanity, disdain
A ministration humble but sincere,
That from a threshold loved by every Muse
Its impulse took—that sorrow-stricken door,
Whence, as a current from its fountain-head,
Our thoughts have issued, and our feelings flowed,
Receiving, willingly or not, fresh strength
From kindred sources; while around us sighed
(Life's three first seasons having passed away)
Leaf-scattering winds; and hoar-frost sprinklings fell
(Foretaste of winter) on the moorland heights;
And every day brought with it tidings new
Of rash change, ominous for the public weal.
Hence, if dejection has too oft encroached
Upon that sweet and tender melancholy
Which may itself be cherished and caressed
More than enough; a fault so natural
(Even with the young, the hopeful, or the gay)
For prompt forgiveness will not sue in vain.

XXVI

THE HIGHLAND BROACH

On ascending a hill that leads from Loch Awe towards Inverary, I fell into conversation with a woman of the humbler class who wore one of those Highland Broaches. I talked with her about it; and upon parting with her, when I said with a kindness I truly felt—"May that Broach continue in your family through many generations to come, as you have already possessed it"—she thanked me most becomingly, and seemed not a little moved.

The exact resemblance which the old Broach (still in use, though rarely met with, among the Highlanders) bears to the Roman Fibula must strike every one, and concurs, with the plaid and kilt, to recall to mind the communication which the ancient Romans had with this remote country.

If to Tradition faith be due,
And echoes from old verse speak true,
Ere the meek Saint, Columba, bore
Glad tidings to Iona's shore,
No common light of nature blessed
The mountain region of the west,
A land where gentle manners ruled
O'er men in dauntless virtues schooled,
That raised, for centuries, a bar
Impervious to the tide of war:
Yet peaceful Arts did entrance gain
Where haughty Force had striven in vain;
And, 'mid the works of skilful hands,
By wanderers brought from foreign lands
And various climes, was not unknown
The clasp that fixed the Roman Gown;
The Fibula, whose shape, I ween,
Still in the Highland Broach is seen,
The silver Broach of massy frame,
Worn at the breast of some grave Dame
On road or path, or at the door
Of fern-thatched hut on heathy moor:
But delicate of yore its mould,
And the material finest gold;
As might beseem the fairest Fair,
Whether she graced a royal chair,
Or shed, within a vaulted hall,
No fancied lustre on the wall
Where shields of mighty heroes hung,
While Fingal heard what Ossian sung.
  The heroic Age expired—it slept
Deep in its tomb:—the bramble crept
O'er Fingal's hearth; the grassy sod
Grew on the floors his sons had trod:
Malvina! where art thou? Their state
The noblest-born must abdicate;
The fairest, while with fire and sword
Come Spoilers—horde impelling horde,
Must walk the sorrowing mountains, drest
By ruder hands in homelier vest.
Yet still the female bosom lent,
And loved to borrow, ornament;
Still was its inner world a place
Reached by the dews of heavenly grace;
Still pity to this last retreat
Clove fondly; to his favourite seat
Love wound his way by soft approach,
Beneath a massier Highland Broach.
  When alternations came of rage
Yet fiercer, in a darker age;
And feuds, where, clan encountering clan,
The weaker perished to a man;
For maid and mother, when despair
Might else have triumphed, baffling prayer,
One small possession lacked not power,
Provided in a calmer hour,
To meet such need as might befall—
Roof, raiment, bread, or burial:
For woman, even of tears bereft,
The hidden silver Broach was left.
  As generations come and go
Their arts, their customs, ebb and flow;
Fate, fortune, sweep strong powers away,
And feeble, of themselves, decay;
What poor abodes the heir-loom hide,
In which the castle once took pride!
Tokens, once kept as boasted wealth,
If saved at all, are saved by stealth.
Lo! ships, from seas by nature barred,
Mount along ways by man prepared;
And in far-stretching vales, whose streams
Seek other seas, their canvas gleams.
Lo! busy towns spring up, on coasts
Thronged yesterday by airy ghosts;
Soon, like a lingering star forlorn
Among the novelties of morn,
While young delights on old encroach,
Will vanish the last Highland Broach.
  But when, from out their viewless bed,
Like vapours, years have rolled and spread;
And this poor verse, and worthier lays,
Shall yield no light of love or praise;
Then, by the spade, or cleaving plough,
Or torrent from the mountain's brow,
Or whirlwind, reckless what his might
Entombs, or forces into light;
Blind Chance, a volunteer ally,
That oft befriends Antiquity,
And clears Oblivion from reproach,
May render back the Highland Broach.[1]

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[1] How much the Broach is sometimes prized by persons in humble stations may be gathered from an occurrence mentioned to me by a female friend. She had had an opportunity of benefiting

DEVOTIONAL INCITEMENTS

Written at Rydal Mount.

> "Not to the earth confined,
> Ascend to heaven."

WHERE will they stop, those breathing Powers,
The Spirits of the new-born flowers?
They wander with the breeze, they wind
Where'er the streams a passage find;
Up from their native ground they rise
In mute aërial harmonies;
From humble violet—modest thyme—
Exhaled, the essential odours climb,
As if no space below the sky
Their subtle flight could satisfy:
Heaven will not tax our thoughts with pride
If like ambition be *their* guide.
  Roused by this kindliest of May-showers,
The spirit-quickener of the flowers,
That with moist virtue softly cleaves
The buds, and freshens the young leaves,
The birds pour forth their souls in notes
Of rapture from a thousand throats—
Here checked by too impetuous haste,
While there the music runs to waste,
With bounty more and more enlarged,
Till the whole air is overcharged;
Give ear, O Man! to their appeal
And thirst for no inferior zeal,
Thou, who canst *think*, as well as feel.
  Mount from the earth; aspire! aspire!
So pleads the town's cathedral quire,
In strains that from their solemn height
Sink, to attain a loftier flight;
While incense from the altar breathes
Rich fragrance in embodied wreaths;
Or, flung from swinging censer, shrouds
The taper-lights, and curls in clouds
Around angelic Forms, the still
Creation of the painter's skill,
That on the service wait concealed
One moment, and the next revealed
—Cast off your bonds, awake, arise,
And for no transient ecstasies!
What else can mean the visual plea
Of still or moving imagery—
The iterated summons loud,
Not wasted on the attendant crowd,
Nor wholly lost upon the throng
Hurrying the busy streets along?
  Alas! the sanctities combined
By art to unsensualise the mind,
Decay and languish; or, as creeds
And humours change, are spurned like weeds:
The priests are from their altars thrust;
Temples are levelled with the dust;
And solemn rites and awful forms
Founder amid fanatic storms.
Yet evermore, through years renewed
In undisturbed vicissitude
Of seasons balancing their flight
On the swift wings of day and night,
Kind Nature keeps a heavenly door
Wide open for the scattered Poor.
Where flower-breathed incense to the skies
Is wafted in mute harmonies;
And ground fresh-cloven by the plough
Is fragrant with a humbler vow;
Where birds and brooks from leafy dells
Chime forth unwearied canticles,
And vapours magnify and spread
The glory of the sun's bright head—
Still constant in her worship, still
Conforming to the eternal Will,
Whether men sow or reap the fields,
Divine monition Nature yields,
That not by bread alone we live,
Or what a hand of flesh can give;
That every day should leave some part
Free for a sabbath of the heart:
So shall the seventh be truly blest,
From morn to eve, with hallowed rest.

1832.

"CALM IS THE FRAGRANT AIR"

CALM is the fragrant air, and loth to lose
Day's grateful warmth, tho' moist with fallin dews.
Look for the stars, you'll say that there are none;
Look up a second time, and, one by one,
You mark them twinkling out with silvery light,
And wonder how they could elude the sight!

---

a poor old woman in her own hut, who, wishing to make a return, said to her daughter, in Erse, in a tone of plaintive earnestness, "I would give anything I have, but I *hope* she does not wish for my Broach!" and, uttering these words, she put her hand upon the Broach which fastened her kerchief, and which, she imagined, had attracted the eye of her benefactress.

The birds, of late so noisy in their bowers,
Warbled a while with faint and fainter powers,
But now are silent as the dim-seen flowers:
Nor does the village Church-clock's iron tone
The time's and season's influence disown;
Nine beats distinctly to each other bound
In drowsy sequence—how unlike the sound
That, in rough winter, oft inflicts a fear
On fireside listeners, doubting what they hear!
The shepherd, bent on rising with the sun,
Had closed his door before the day was done,
And now with thankful heart to bed doth creep,
And joins his little children in their sleep.
The bat, lured forth where trees the lane o'ershade,
Flits and reflits along the close arcade;
The busy dor-hawk chases the white moth
With burring note, which Industry and Sloth
Might both be pleased with, for it suits them both.
A stream is heard—I see it not, but know
By its soft music whence the waters flow:
Wheels and the tread of hoofs are heard no more;
One boat there was, but it will touch the shore
With the next dipping of its slackened oar;
Faint sound, that, for the gayest of the gay,
Might give to serious thought a moment's sway,
As a last token of man's toilsome day!
1832.

RURAL ILLUSIONS

Written at Rydal Mount. Observed a hundred times in the grounds there.

Sylph was it? or a Bird more bright
Than those of fabulous stock?
A second darted by;—and lo!
Another of the flock,
Through sunshine flitting from the bough
To nestle in the rock.
Transient deception! a gay freak
Of April's mimicries!
Those brilliant strangers, hailed with joy
Among the budding trees,
Proved last year's leaves, pushed from the spray
To frolic on the breeze.

Maternal Flora! show thy face,
And let thy hand be seen,
Thy hand here sprinkling tiny flowers,
That, as they touch the green,
Take root (so seems it) and look up
In honour of their Queen.
Yet, sooth, those little starry specks,
That not in vain aspired
To be confounded with live growths,
Most dainty, most admired,
Were only blossoms dropt from twigs
Of their own offspring tired.

Not such the World's illusive shows;
Her wingless flutterings,
Her blossoms which, though shed, outbrave
The floweret as it springs,
For the undeceived, smile as they may,
Are melancholy things:
But gentle Nature plays her part
With ever-varying wiles,
And transient feignings with plain truth
So well she reconciles,
That those fond Idlers most are pleased
Whom oftenest she beguiles. 1832.

LOVING AND LIKING

IRREGULAR VERSES

ADDRESSED TO A CHILD

(BY MY SISTER)

Written at Rydal Mount. It arose, I believe, out of a casual expression of one of Mr. Swinburne's children.

There's more in words than I can teach:
Yet listen, Child!—I would not preach;
But only give some plain directions
To guide your speech and your affections.
Say not you *love* a roasted fowl,
But you may love a screaming owl,
And, if you can, the unwieldy toad
That crawls from his secure abode
Within the mossy garden wall
When evening dews begin to fall.
Oh mark the beauty of his eye:
What wonders in that circle lie!
So clear, so bright, our fathers said
He wears a jewel in his head!

And when, upon some showery day,
Into a path or public way
A frog leaps out from bordering grass,
Startling the timid as they pass,
Do you observe him, and endeavour
To take the intruder into favour;
Learning from him to find a reason
For a light heart in a dull season.
And you may love him in the pool,
That is for him a happy school,
In which he swims as taught by nature,
Fit pattern for a human creature,
Glancing amid the water bright,
And sending upward sparkling light.
  Nor blush if o'er your heart be stealing
A love for things that have no feeling:
The spring's first rose by you espied,
May fill your breast with joyful pride;
And you may love the strawberry-flower,
And love the strawberry in its bower;
But when the fruit, so often praised
For beauty, to your lip is raised,
Say not you *love* the delicate treat,
But *like* it, enjoy it, and thankfully eat.
  Long may you love your pensioner mouse,
Though one of a tribe that torment the house:
Nor dislike for her cruel sport the cat,
Deadly foe both of mouse and rat;
Remember she follows the law of her kind,
And Instinct is neither wayward nor blind.
Then think of her beautiful gliding form,
Her tread that would scarcely crush a worm,
And her soothing song by the winter fire,
Soft as the dying throb of the lyre.
  I would not circumscribe your love:
It may soar with the eagle and brood with the dove,
May pierce the earth with the patient mole,
Or track the hedgehog to his hole.
Loving and liking are the solace of life,
Rock the cradle of joy, smooth the death-bed of strife.
You love your father and your mother,
Your grown-up and your baby brother;
You love your sister, and your friends,
And countless blessings which God sends:
And while these right affections play,
You *live* each moment of your day;
They lead you on to full content,
And likings fresh and innocent,
That store the mind, the memory feed,
And prompt to many a gentle deed:
But *likings* come, and pass away;
'Tis *love* that remains till our latest day:
Our heavenward guide is holy love,
And will be our bliss with saints above.

1832.

UPON THE LATE GENERAL FAST

MARCH 1832

RELUCTANT call it was; the rite delayed;
And in the Senate some there were who doffed
The last of their humanity, and scoffed
At providential judgments, undismayed
By their own daring. But the People prayed
As with one voice; their flinty heart grew soft
With penitential sorrow, and aloft
Their spirit mounted, crying, "God us aid!"
Oh that with aspirations more intense,
Chastised by self-abasement more profound,
This People, once so happy, so renowned
For liberty, would seek from God defence
Against far heavier ill, the pestilence
Of revolution, impiously unbound!

FILIAL PIETY

ON THE WAYSIDE BETWEEN PRESTON AND LIVERPOOL

This was communicated to me by a coachman at whose side I sat while he was driving. In the course of my many coach rambles and journeys, which, during the daytime always and often in the night, were taken on the outside of the coach, I had good and frequent opportunities of learning the characteristics of this class of men. One remark I made that is worth recording; that whenever I had occasion especially to notice their well-ordered, respectful, and kind behaviour to women, of whatever age, I found them, I may say almost always, to be married men.

UNTOUCHED through all severity of cold;
Inviolate, whate'er the cottage hearth
Might need for comfort, or for festal mirth;
That Pile of Turf is half a century old:
Yes, Traveller! fifty winters have been told

Since suddenly the dart of death went forth
'Gainst him who raised it,—his last work on earth:
Thence has it, with the Son, so strong a hold
Upon his Father's memory, that his hands,
Through reverence, touch it only to repair
Its waste.—Though crumbling with each breath of air,
In annual renovation thus it stands—
Rude Mausoleum! but wrens nestle there,
And red-breasts warble when sweet sounds are rare.
1832.

TO B. R. HAYDON, ON SEEING HIS PICTURE OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE ON THE ISLAND OF ST. HELENA

This Sonnet, though said to be written on seeing the Portrait of Napoleon, was, in fact, composed some time after, extempore, in the wood at Rydal Mount.

HAYDON! let worthier judges praise the skill
Here by thy pencil shown in truth of lines
And charm of colours; *I* applaud those signs
Of thought, that give the true poetic thrill;
That unencumbered whole of blank and still
Sky without cloud—ocean without a wave;
And the one Man that laboured to enslave
The World, sole-standing high on the bare hill—
Back turned, arms folded, the unapparent face
Tinged, we may fancy, in this dreary place,
With light reflected from the invisible sun
Set, like his fortunes; but not set for aye
Like them. The unguilty Power pursues his way,
And before *him* doth dawn perpetual run.
1832.

"IF THOU INDEED DERIVE THY LIGHT FROM HEAVEN"

These verses were written some time after we had become residents at Rydal Mount, and I will take occasion from them to observe upon the beauty of that situation, as being backed and flanked by lofty fells, which bring the heavenly bodies to touch, as it were, the earth upon the mountain-tops, while the prospect in front lies open to a length of level valley, the extended lake, and a terminating ridge of low hills; so that it gives an opportunity to the inhabitants of the place of noticing the stars in both the positions here alluded to, namely, on the tops of the mountains, and as winter-lamps at a distance among the leafless trees.

IF thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content:—
The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from the zenith dart their beams,
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness)
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire on the ridge
Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
Among the branches of the leafless trees.
All are the undying offspring of one Sire:
Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content.
1832.

A WREN'S NEST

Written at Rydal Mount. This nest was built, as described, in a tree that grows near the pool in Dora's field next the Rydal Mount garden.

AMONG the dwellings framed by birds
In field or forest with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren's
In snugness may compare.

No door the tenement requires,
And seldom needs a laboured roof;
Yet is it to the fiercest sun
Impervious, and storm-proof.

So warm, so beautiful withal,
In perfect fitness for its aim,
That to the Kind by special grace
Their instinct surely came.

And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,
The hermit has no finer eye
For shadowy quietness.

These find, 'mid ivied abbey-walls,
A canopy in some still nook;
Others are pent-housed by a brae
That overhangs a brook.

There to the brooding bird her mate
Warbles by fits his low clear song;
And by the busy streamlet both
Are sung to all day long.

Or in sequestered lanes they build,
Where, till the flitting bird's return,
Her eggs within the nest repose,
Like relics in an urn.

But still, where general choice is good,
There is a better and a best;
And, among fairest objects, some
Are fairer than the rest;

This, one of those small builders proved
In a green covert, where, from out
The forehead of a pollard oak,
The leafy antlers sprout;

For She who planned the mossy lodge,
Mistrusting her evasive skill,
Had to a Primrose looked for aid
Her wishes to fulfil.

High on the trunk's projecting brow,
And fixed an infant's span above
The budding flowers, peeped forth the nest
The prettiest of the grove!

The treasure proudly did I show
To some whose minds without disdain
Can turn to little things; but once
Looked up for it in vain:

'Tis gone—a ruthless spoiler's prey,
Who heeds not beauty, love, or song,
'Tis gone! (so seemed it) and we grieved
Indignant at the wrong.

Just three days after, passing by
In clearer light the moss-built cell
I saw, espied its shaded mouth;
And felt that all was well.

The Primrose for a veil had spread
The largest of her upright leaves;
And thus, for purposes benign,
A simple flower deceives.

Concealed from friends who might disturb
Thy quiet with no ill intent,
Secure from evil eyes and hands
On barbarous plunder bent,

Rest, Mother-bird! and when thy young
Take flight, and thou art free to roam,
When withered is the guardian Flower,
And empty thy late home,

Think how ye prospered, thou and thine,
Amid the unviolated grove
Housed near the growing Primrose-tuft
In foresight, or in love. 1833

TO ——

UPON THE BIRTH OF HER FIRST-BORN CHILD, MARCH 1833

Written at Moresby near Whitehaven, when I was on a visit to my son, then Incumbent of that small living. While I am dictating these notes to my friend, Miss Fenwick, January 24, 1843, the child upon whose birth these verses were written is under my roof, and is of a disposition so promising that the wishes and prayers and prophecies which I then breathed forth in verse are, through God's mercy, likely to be realised.

> "Tum porro puer, ut sævis projectus ab undis
> Navita, nudus humi jacet, etc."—LUCRETIUS.

LIKE a shipwrecked Sailor tost
By rough waves on a perilous coast,
Lies the Babe, in helplessness
And in tenderest nakedness,
Flung by labouring nature forth
Upon the mercies of the earth.
Can its eyes beseech?—no more
Than the hands are free to implore:
Voice but serves for one brief cry;
Plaint was it? or prophecy
Of sorrow that will surely come?
Omen of man's grievous doom!

But, O Mother! by the close
Duly granted to thy throes;
By the silent thanks, now tending
Incense-like to Heaven, descending
Now to mingle and to move
With the gush of earthly love,
As a debt to that frail Creature,
Instrument of struggling Nature
For the blissful calm, the peace
Known but to this *one* release—
Can the pitying spirit doubt
That for human-kind springs out
From the penalty a sense
Of more than mortal recompence?
As a floating summer cloud,
Though of gorgeous drapery proud,
To the sun-burnt traveller,
Or the stooping labourer,
Oft-times makes its bounty known
By its shadow round him thrown;
So, by chequerings of sad cheer,
Heavenly Guardians, brooding near,
Of their presence tell—too bright
Haply for corporeal sight!
Ministers of grace divine
Feelingly their brows incline
O'er this seeming Castaway
Breathing, in the light of day,
Something like the faintest breath
That has power to baffle death—
Beautiful, while very weakness
Captivates like passive meekness.
And, sweet Mother! under warrant
Of the universal Parent,
Who repays in season due
Them who have, like thee, been true
To the filial chain let down
From his everlasting throne,
Angels hovering round thy couch,
With their softest whispers vouch,
That—whatever griefs may fret,
Cares entangle, sins beset,
This thy First-born, and with tears
Stain her cheek in future years—
Heavenly succour, not denied
To the babe, whate'er betide,
Will to the woman be supplied!
Mother! blest be thy calm ease;
Blest the starry promises,—
And the firmament benign
Hallowed be it, where they shine!
Yes, for them whose souls have scope
Ample for a wingèd hope,
And can earthward bend an ear
For needful listening, pledge is here,
That, if thy new-born Charge shall tread
In thy footsteps, and be led
By that other Guide, whose light
Of manly virtues, mildly bright,
Gave him first the wished-for part
In thy gentle virgin heart;
Then, amid the storms of life
Presignified by that dread strife
Whence ye have escaped together,
She may look for serene weather;
In all trials sure to find
Comfort for a faithful mind;
Kindlier issues, holier rest,
Than even now await her prest,
Conscious Nursling, to thy breast!

THE WARNING

A SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING

These lines were composed during the fever spread through the Nation by the Reform Bill. As the motives which led to this measure, and the good or evil which has attended or has risen from it, will be duly appreciated by future historians, there is no call for dwelling on the subject in this place. I will content myself with saying that the then condition of the people's mind is not, in these verses, exaggerated.

List, the winds of March are blowing;
Her ground-flowers shrink, afraid of showing
Their meek heads to the nipping air,
Which ye feel not, happy pair!
Sunk into a kindly sleep.
We, meanwhile, our hope will keep;
And if Time leagued with adverse Change
(Too busy fear!) shall cross its range,
Whatsoever check they bring,
Anxious duty hindering,
To like hope our prayers will cling.
Thus, while the ruminating spirit feeds
Upon the events of home as life proceeds,
Affections pure and holy in their source
Gain a fresh impulse, run a livelier course;
Hopes that within the Father's heart prevail,
Are in the experienced Grandsire's slow to fail;
And if the harp pleased his gay youth, it rings
To his grave touch with no unready strings,

While thoughts press on, and feelings overflow,
And quick words round him fall like flakes of snow.
Thanks to the Powers that yet maintain their sway,
And have renewed the tributary Lay.
Truths of the heart flock in with eager pace,
And FANCY greets them with a fond embrace;
Swift as the rising sun his beams extends
She shoots the tidings forth to distant friends;
Their gifts she hails (deemed precious, as they prove
For the unconscious Babe so prompt a love!)—
But from this peaceful centre of delight
Vague sympathies have urged her to take flight:
Rapt into upper regions, like the bee
That sucks from mountain heath her honey fee;
Or, like the warbling lark intent to shroud
His head in sunbeams or a bowery cloud,
She soars—and here and there her pinions rest
On proud towers, like this humble cottage, blest
With a new visitant, an infant guest—
Towers where red streamers flout the breezy sky
In pomp foreseen by her creative eye,
When feasts shall crowd the hall, and steeple bells
Glad proclamation make, and heights and dells
Catch the blithe music as it sinks and swells,
And harboured ships, whose pride is on the sea,
Shall hoist their topmost flags in sign of glee,
Honouring the hope of noble ancestry.
But who (though neither reckoning ills assigned
By Nature, nor reviewing in the mind
The track that was, and is, and must be, worn
With weary feet by all of woman born)—
Shall *now* by such a gift with joy be moved,
Nor feel the fulness of that joy reproved?
Not He, whose last faint memory will command
The truth that Britain was his native land;
Whose infant soul was tutored to confide
In the cleansed faith for which her martyrs died;
Whose boyish ear the voice of her renown
With rapture thrilled; whose Youth revered the crown
Of Saxon liberty that Alfred wore,
Alfred, dear Babe, thy great Progenitor!
—Not He, who from her mellowed practice drew
His social sense of just, and fair, and true;
And saw, thereafter, on the soil of France
Rash Polity begin her maniac dance,
Foundations broken up, the deeps run wild,
Nor grieved to see (himself not unbeguiled)—
Woke from the dream, the dreamer to upbraid,
And learn how sanguine expectations fade
When novel trusts by folly are betrayed,—
To see Presumption, turning pale, refrain
From further havoc, but repent in vain,—
Good aims lie down, and perish in the road
Where guilt had urged them on with ceaseless goad,
Proofs thickening round her that on public ends
Domestic virtue vitally depends,
That civic strife can turn the happiest hearth
Into a grievous sore of self-tormenting earth.
Can such a One, dear Babe! though glad and proud
To welcome thee, repel the fears that crowd
Into his English breast, and spare to quake
Less for his own than for thy innocent sake?
Too late—or, should the providence of God
Lead, through dark ways by sin and sorrow trod,
Justice and peace to a secure abode,
Too soon—thou com'st into this breathing world;
Ensigns of mimic outrage are unfurled.
Who shall preserve or prop the tottering Realm?
What hand suffice to govern the state-helm?
If, in the aims of men, the surest test
Of good or bad (whate'er be sought for or profest)
Lie in the means required, or ways ordained,
For compassing the end, else never gained;

Yet governors and governed both are blind
To this plain truth, or fling it to the wind;
If to expedience principle must bow;
Past, future, shrinking up beneath the incumbent Now;
If cowardly concession still must feed
The thirst for power in men who ne'er concede;
Nor turn aside, unless to shape a way
For domination at some riper day;
If generous Loyalty must stand in awe
Of subtle Treason, in his mask of law,
Or with bravado insolent and hard,
Provoking punishment, to win reward;
If office help the factious to conspire,
And they who *should* extinguish, fan the fire—
Then, will the sceptre be a straw, the crown
Sit loosely, like the thistle's crest of down;
To be blown off at will, by Power that spares it
In cunning patience, from the head that wears it.
Lost people, trained to theoretic feud!
Lost above all, ye labouring multitude!
Bewildered whether ye, by slanderous tongues
Deceived, mistake calamities for wrongs;
And over fancied usurpations brood,
Oft snapping at revenge in sullen mood;
Or, from long stress of real injuries, fly
To desperation for a remedy;
In bursts of outrage spread your judgments wide,
And to your wrath cry out, "Be thou our guide;"
Or, bound by oaths, come forth to tread earth's floor
In marshalled thousands, darkening street and moor
With the worst shape mock-patience ever wore;
Or, to the giddy top of self-esteem
By Flatterers carried, mount into a dream
Of boundless suffrage, at whose sage behest
Justice shall rule, disorder be suppress,
And every man sit down as Plenty's Guest!
—Oh for a bridle bitted with remorse
To stop your Leaders in their headstrong course!
Oh may the Almighty scatter with his grace
These mists, and lead you to a safer place,
By paths no human wisdom can foretrace!
May He pour round you, from worlds far above
Man's feverish passions, his pure light of love,
That quietly restores the natural mien
To hope, and makes truth willing to be seen!
Else shall your blood-stained hands in frenzy reap
Fields gaily sown when promises were cheap.—
Why is the Past belied with wicked art,
The Future made to play so false a part,
Among a people famed for strength of mind,
Foremost in freedom, noblest of mankind?
We act as if we joyed in the sad tune
Storms make in rising, valued in the moon
Nought but her changes. Thus, ungrateful Nation!
If thou persist, and scorning moderation,
Spread for thyself the snares of tribulation,
Whom, then, shall meekness guard? What saving skill
Lie in forbearance, strength in standing still?
—Soon shall the widow (for the speed of Time
Nought equals when the hours are winged with crime)
Widow, or wife, implore on tremulous knee,
From him who judged her lord, a like decree;
The skies will weep o'er old men desolate:
Ye little-ones! Earth shudders at your fate,
Outcasts and homeless orphans——
But turn, my Soul, and from the sleeping pair
Learn thou the beauty of omniscient care!
Be strong in faith, bid anxious thoughts lie still;
Seek for the good and cherish it—the ill
Oppose, or bear with a submissive will.
1833.

"IF THIS GREAT WORLD OF JOY AND PAIN"

If this great world of joy and pain
Revolve in one sure track;
If freedom, set, will rise again,
And virtue, flown, come back;
Woe to the purblind crew who fill
The heart with each day's care;
Nor gain, from past or future, skill
To bear, and to forbear! 1833.

ON A HIGH PART OF THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND

Easter Sunday, April 7

THE AUTHOR'S SIXTH-THIRD BIRTHDAY

The lines were composed on the road between Moresby and Whitehaven while I was on a visit to my son, then rector of the former place. This and some other Voluntaries originated in the concluding lines of the last paragraph of this poem. With this coast I have been familiar from my earliest childhood, and remember being struck for the first time by the town and port of Whitehaven, and the white waves breaking against its quays and piers, as the whole came into view from the top of the high ground down which the road (it has since been altered) then descended abruptly. My sister, when she first heard the voice of the sea from this point, and beheld the scene spread before her, burst into tears. Our family then lived at Cockermouth, and this fact was often mentioned among us as indicating the sensibility for which she was so remarkable.

THE Sun, that seemed so mildly to retire,
Flung back from distant climes a streaming fire,
Whose blaze is now subdued to tender gleams,
Prelude of night's approach with soothing dreams.
Look round;—of all the clouds not one is moving;
'Tis the still hour of thinking, feeling, loving.
Silent, and stedfast as the vaulted sky,
The boundless plain of waters seems to lie:—
Comes that low sound from breezes rustling o'er
The grass-crowned headland that conceals the shore?
No; 'tis the earth-voice of the mighty sea,
Whispering how meek and gentle he *can* be!
  Thou Power supreme! who, arming to rebuke
Offenders, dost put off the gracious look,
And clothe thyself with terrors like the flood
Of ocean roused into its fiercest mood,
Whatever discipline thy Will ordain
For the brief course that must for me remain;
Teach me with quick-eared spirit to rejoice
In admonitions of thy softest voice!
Whate'er the path these mortal feet may trace,
Breathe through my soul the blessing of thy grace,
Glad, through a perfect love, a faith sincere
Drawn from the wisdom that begins with fear,
Glad to expand; and, for a season, free
From finite cares, to rest absorbed in Thee!
1833.

(BY THE SEASIDE)

THE sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest,
And the wild storm hath somewhere found a nest;
Air slumbers—wave with wave no longer strives,
Only a heaving of the deep survives,
A tell-tale motion! soon will it be laid,
And by the tide alone the water swayed.
Stealthy withdrawings, interminglings mild
Of light with shade in beauty reconciled—
Such is the prospect far as sight can range,
The soothing recompence, the welcome change.
Where, now, the ships that drove before the blast,
Threatened by angry breakers as they passed;
And by a train of flying clouds bemocked;
Or, in the hollow surge, at anchor rocked
As on a bed of death? Some lodge in peace,
Saved by His care who bade the tempest cease;
And some, too heedless of past danger, court
Fresh gales to waft them to the far-off port
But near, or hanging sea and sky between,
Not one of all those wingèd powers is seen,
Seen in her course, nor 'mid this quiet heard;
Yet oh! how gladly would the air be stirred
By some acknowledgment of thanks and praise,
Soft in its temper as those vesper lays
Sung to the Virgin while accordant oars
Urge the slow bark along Calabrian shores;
A sea-born service through the mountains felt

Till into one loved vision all things melt:
Or like those hymns that soothe with graver sound
The gulfy coast of Norway iron-bound;
And, from the wide and open Baltic, rise
With punctual care, Lutherian harmonies.
Hush, not a voice is here! but why repine,
Now when the star of eve comes forth to shine
On British waters with that look benign?
Ye mariners, that plough your onward way,
Or in the haven rest, or sheltering bay,
May silent thanks at least to God be given
With a full heart; "our thoughts are *heard* in heaven." 1833.

POEMS

COMPOSED OR SUGGESTED DURING A TOUR IN THE SUMMER OF 1833

My companions were H. C. Robinson and my son John.

Having been prevented by the lateness of the season, in 1831, from visiting Staffa and Iona, the author made these the principal objects of a short tour in the summer of 1833, of which the following series of poems is a Memorial. The course pursued was down the Cumberland river Derwent, and to Whitehaven; thence (by the Isle of Man, where a few days were passed) up the Frith of Clyde to Greenock, then to Oban, Staffa, Iona; and back towards England, by Loch Awe, Inverary, Loch Goil-head, Greenock, and through parts of Renfrewshire, Ayrshire, and Dumfriesshire to Carlisle, and thence up the river Eden, and homewards by Ullswater.

I

ADIEU, Rydalian Laurels! that have grown
And spread as if ye knew that days might come
When ye would shelter in a happy home,
On this fair Mount, a Poet of your own,
One who ne'er ventured for a Delphic crown
To sue the God; but, haunting your green shade
All seasons through, is humbly pleased to braid
Ground-flowers, beneath your guardianship, self-sown.
Farewell! no Minstrels now with harp new-strung
For summer wandering quit their household bowers;
Yet not for this wants Poesy a tongue
To cheer the Itinerant on whom she pours
Her spirit, while he crosses lonely moors,
Or musing sits forsaken halls among.

II

WHY should the Enthusiast, journeying through this Isle
Repine as if his hour were come too late?
Not unprotected in her mouldering state,
Antiquity salutes him with a smile,
'Mid fruitful fields that ring with jocund toil,
And pleasure-grounds where Taste, refined Co-mate
Of Truth and Beauty, strives to imitate,
Far as she may, primeval Nature's style.
Fair land! by Time's parental love made free,
By Social Order's watchful arms embraced;
With unexampled union meet in thee,
For eye and mind, the present and the past;
With golden prospect for futurity,
If that be reverenced which ought to last.

III

THEY called Thee MERRY ENGLAND, in old time;
A happy people won for thee that name
With envy heard in many a distant clime;
And, spite of change, for me thou keep'st the same
Endearing title, a responsive chime
To the heart's fond belief; though some there are
Whose sterner judgments deem that word a snare
For inattentive Fancy, like the lime
Which foolish birds are caught with. Can, I ask,
This face of rural beauty be a mask
For discontent, and poverty, and crime;
These spreading towns a cloak for lawless will?
Forbid it, Heaven!—and MERRY ENGLAND still
Shall be thy rightful name, in prose and rhyme!

IV

TO THE RIVER GRETA, NEAR KESWICK

GRETA, what fearful listening! when huge stones
Rumble along thy bed, block after block:
Or, whirling with reiterated shock,
Combat, while darkness aggravates the groans:
But if thou (like Cocytus from the moans
Heard on his rueful margin) thence wert named
The Mourner, thy true nature was defamed,
And the habitual murmur that atones
For thy worst rage, forgotten.[1] Oft as Spring
Decks, on thy sinuous banks, her thousand thrones
Seats of glad instinct and love's carolling,
The concert, for the happy, then may vie
With liveliest peals of birth-day harmony:
To a grieved heart, the notes are benisons.

V

TO THE RIVER DERWENT

AMONG the mountains were we nursed, loved Stream
Thou near the eagle's nest—within brief sail,
I, of his bold wing floating on the gale,
Where thy deep voice could lull me! Faint the beam
Of human life when first allowed to gleam
On mortal notice.—Glory of the vale,
Such thy meek outset, with a crown, though frail,
Kept in perpetual verdure by the steam
Of thy soft breath!—Less vivid wreath entwined
Nemæan victor's brow; less bright was worn,
Meed of some Roman chief—in triumph borne
With captives chained; and shedding from his car
The sunset splendours of a finished war
Upon the proud enslavers of mankind!

1819.

VI

IN SIGHT OF THE TOWN OF COCKERMOUTH

Where the Author was born, and his Father's remains are laid.

A POINT of life between my Parent's dust,
And yours, my buried Little-ones! am I;
And to those graves looking habitually
In kindred quiet I repose my trust.
Death to the innocent is more than just,
And, to the sinner, mercifully bent;
So may I hope, if truly I repent
And meekly bear the ills which bear I must:
And You, my Offspring! that do still remain,
Yet may outstrip me in the appointed race,
If e'er, through fault of mine, in mutual pain
We breathed together for a moment's space,
The wrong, by love provoked, let love arraign,
And only love keep in your hearts a place.

VII

ADDRESS FROM THE SPIRIT OF COCKERMOUTH CASTLE

"THOU look'st upon me, and dost fondly think,
Poet! that, stricken as both are by years,
We, differing once so much, are now Compeers,
Prepared, when each has stood his time, to sink
Into the dust. Erewhile a sterner link
United us; when thou, in boyish play,
Entering my dungeon, didst become a prey
To soul-appalling darkness. Not a blink
Of light was there;—and thus did I, thy Tutor,
Make thy young thoughts acquainted with the grave;
While thou wert chasing the winged butterfly
Through my green courts; or climbing, a bold suitor,
Up to the flowers whose golden progeny
Still round my shattered brow in beauty wave."

VIII

NUN'S WELL, BRIGHAM

So named from the religious House which stood close by. I have rather an odd anecdote to relate of the Nun's Well. One day the landlady of a public-house, a field's length from the well, on the road side, said to me—"You have been to see the Nun's Well, Sir?"—"The Nun's Well! what is that?" said the Postman, who in his royal livery stopt his mail-car at the door.

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[1] See Note.

The landlady and I explained to him what the name meant, and what sort of people the nuns were. A countryman who was standing by, rather tipsy, stammered out—"Aye, those nuns were good people; they are gone; but we shall soon have them back again." The Reform mania was just then at its height.

THE cattle crowding round this beverage clear
To slake their thirst, with reckless hoofs have trod
The encircling turf into a barren clod;
Through which the waters creep, then disappear,
Born to be lost in Derwent flowing near;
Yet, o'er the brink, and round the limestone cell
Of the pure spring (they call it the "Nun's Well,"
Name that first struck by chance my startled ear)
A tender Spirit broods—the pensive Shade
Of ritual honours to this Fountain paid
By hooded Votaresses with saintly cheer;
Albeit oft the Virgin-mother mild
Looked down with pity upon eyes beguiled
Into the shedding of "too soft a tear."[1]

IX

TO A FRIEND

ON THE BANKS OF THE DERWENT

My son John, who was then building a parsonage on his small living at Brigham.

PASTOR and Patriot!—at whose bidding rise
These modest walls, amid a flock that need,
For one who comes to watch them and to feed,
A fixed Abode—keep down presageful sighs.
Threats, which the unthinking only can despise,
Perplex the Church; but be thou firm,—be true
To thy first hope, and this good work pursue,
Poor as thou art. A welcome sacrifice
Dost Thou prepare, whose sign will be the smoke
Of thy new hearth; and sooner shall its wreaths,
Mounting while earth her morning incense breathes,
From wandering fiends of air receive a yoke,
And straightway cease to aspire, than God disdain
This humble tribute as ill-timed or vain.

X

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

LANDING AT THE MOUTH OF THE DERWENT, WORKINGTON

I will mention for the sake of the friend who is writing down these notes, that it was among the fine Scotch firs near Ambleside, and particularly those near Green Bank, that I have over and over again paused at the sight of this image. Long may they stand to afford a like gratification to others!—This wish is not uncalled for, several of their brethren having already disappeared.

DEAR to the Loves, and to the Graces vowed,
The Queen drew back the wimple that she wore;
And to the throng, that on the Cumbrian shore
Her landing hailed, how touchingly she bowed!
And like a Star (that, from a heavy cloud
Of pine-tree foliage poised in air, forth darts,
When a soft summer gale at evening parts
The gloom that did its loveliness enshroud)
She smiled; but Time, the old Saturnian seer,
Sighed on the wing as her foot pressed the strand,
With step prelusive to a long array
Of woes and degradations hand in hand—
Weeping captivity, and shuddering fear
Stilled by the ensanguined block of Fotheringay![2]

XI

STANZAS SUGGESTED IN A STEAMBOAT OFF SAINT BEES' HEADS, ON THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND[2]

IF Life were slumber on a bed of down,
Toil unimposed, vicissitude unknown,
Sad were our lot: no hunter of the hare
Exults like him whose javelin from the lair

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[1] See Note.

[2] See Note.

Has roused the lion; no one plucks the rose,
Whose proffered beauty in safe shelter blows
'Mid a trim garden's summer luxuries,
With joy like his who climbs, on hands and knees,
For some rare plant, yon Headland of St. Bees.

This independence upon oar and sail,
This new indifference to breeze or gale,
This straight-lined progress, furrowing a flat lea,
And regular as if locked in certainty—
Depress the hours. Up, Spirit of the storm!
That Courage may find something to perform;
That Fortitude, whose blood disdains to freeze
At Danger's bidding, may confront the seas,
Firm as the towering Headlands of St. Bees.

Dread cliff of Baruth! *that* wild wish may sleep,
Bold as if men and creatures of the Deep
Breathed the same element; too many wrecks
Have struck thy sides, too many ghastly decks
Hast thou looked down upon, that such a thought
Should here be welcome, and in verse enwrought:
With thy stern aspect better far agrees
Utterance of thanks that we have past with ease,
As millions thus shall do, the Headlands of St. Bees.

Yet, while each useful Art augments her store,
What boots the gain if Nature should lose more?
And Wisdom, as she holds a Christian place
In man's intelligence sublimed by grace?
When Bega sought of yore the Cumbrian coast,
Tempestuous winds her holy errand crossed:
She knelt in prayer—the waves their wrath appease;
And, from her vow well weighed in Heaven's decrees,
Rose, where she touched the strand, the Chantry of St. Bees.

"Cruel of heart were they, bloody of hand,"
Who in these Wilds then struggled for command;
The strong were merciless, without hope the weak;
Till this bright Stranger came, fair as day-break,
And as a cresset true that darts its length
Of beamy lustre from a tower of strength;
Guiding the mariner through troubled seas,
And cheering oft his peaceful reveries,
Like the fixed Light that crowns yon Headland of St. Bees.

To aid the Votaress, miracles believed
Wrought in men's minds, like miracles achieved;
So piety took root; and Song might tell
What humanizing virtues near her cell
Sprang up, and spread their fragrance wide around;
How savage bosoms melted at the sound
Of gospel-truth enchained in harmonies
Wafted o'er waves, or creeping through close trees,
From her religious Mansion of St. Bees.

When her sweet Voice, that instrument of love,
Was glorified, and took its place, above
The silent stars, among the angelic quire,
Her chantry blazed with sacrilegious fire,
And perished utterly; but her good deeds
Had sown the spot, that witnessed them, with seeds
Which lay in earth expectant, till a breeze
With quickening impulse answered their mute pleas,
And lo! a *statelier* pile, the Abbey of St. Bees.

There are the naked clothed, the hungry fed;
And Charity extendeth to the dead
Her intercessions made for the soul's rest
Of tardy penitents; or for the best
Among the good (when love might else have slept,
Sickened, or died) in pious memory kept.
Thanks to the austere and simple Devotees,
Who, to that service bound by venial fees,
Keep watch before the altars of St. Bees.

Are not, in sooth, their Requiem's sacred ties[1]
Woven out of passion's sharpest agonies,
Subdued, composed, and formalized by art,
To fix a wiser sorrow in the heart?
The prayer for them whose hour is past away
Says to the Living, profit while ye may!
A little part, and that the worst, he sees
Who thinks that priestly cunning holds the keys
That best unlock the secrets of St. Bees.

Conscience, the timid being's inmost light,
Hope of the dawn and solace of the night,
Cheers these Recluses with a steady ray
In many an hour when judgment goes astray.
Ah! scorn not hastily their rule who try
Earth to despise, and flesh to mortify;
Consume with zeal, in wingèd ecstasies
Of prayer and praise forget their rosaries,
Nor hear the loudest surges of St. Bees.

Yet none so prompt to succour and protect
The forlorn traveller, or sailor wrecked
On the bare coast; nor do they grudge the boon
Which staff and cockle hat and sandal shoon
Claim for the pilgrim: and, though chidings sharp
May sometimes greet the strolling minstrel's harp,
It is not then when, swept with sportive ease,
It charms a feast-day throng of all degrees,
Brightening the archway of revered St. Bees.

How did the cliffs and echoing hills rejoice
What time the Benedictine Brethren's voice,
Imploring, or commanding with meet pride,
Summoned the Chiefs to lay their feuds aside,
And under one blest ensign serve the Lord
In Palestine. Advance, indignant Sword!
Flaming till thou from Panym hands release
That Tomb, dread centre of all sanctities
Nursed in the quiet Abbey of St. Bees.

But look we now to them whose minds from far
Follow the fortunes which they may not share.
While in Judea Fancy loves to roam,
She helps to make a Holy-land at home:
The Star of Bethlehem from its sphere invites
To sound the crystal depth of maiden rights;
And wedded Life, through scriptural mysteries,
Heavenward ascends with all her charities,
Taught by the hooded Celibates of St. Bees.

Nor be it e'er forgotten how, by skill
Of cloistered Architects, free their souls to fill
With love of God, throughout the Land were raised
Churches, on whose symbolic beauty gazed
Peasant and mail-clad Chief with pious awe;
As at this day men seeing what they saw,
Or the bare wreck of faith's solemnities,
Aspire to more than earthly destinies;
Witness yon Pile that greets us from St. Bees.

Yet more; around those Churches, gathered Towns
Safe from the feudal Castle's haughty frowns;
Peaceful abodes, where Justice might uphold
Her scales with even hand, and culture mould
The heart to pity, train the mind in care
For rules of life, sound as the Time could bear.
Nor dost thou fail, thro' abject love of ease,
Or hindrance raised by sordid purposes,
To bear thy part in this good work, St. Bees.

Who with the ploughshare clove the barren moors,
And to green meadows changed the swampy shores?
Thinned the rank woods; and for the cheerful grange
Made room, where wolf and boar were used to range?
Who taught, and showed by deeds, that gentler chains
Should bind the vassal to his lord's domains?—

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[1] See Note.

The thoughtful Monks, intent their God to please,
For Christ's dear sake, by human sympathies
Poured from the bosom of thy Church, St. Bees!

But all availed not; by a mandate given
Through lawless will the Brotherhood was driven
Forth from their cells; their ancient House laid low
In Reformation's sweeping overthrow.
But now once more the local Heart revives,
The inextinguishable Spirit strives.
Oh may that Power who hushed the stormy seas,
And cleared a way for the first Votaries,
Prosper the new-born College of St. Bees!

Alas! the Genius of our age, from Schools
Less humble, draws her lessons, aims, and rules.
To Prowess guided by her insight keen
Matter and Spirit are as one Machine;
Boastful Idolatress of formal skill
She in her own would merge the eternal will:
Better, if Reason's triumphs match with these,
Her flight before the bold credulities
That furthered the first teaching of St. Bees.[1]

XII

IN THE CHANNEL, BETWEEN THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND AND THE ISLE OF MAN

RANGING the heights of Scawfell or Black-comb,
In his lone course the Shepherd oft will pause,
And strive to fathom the mysterious laws
By which the clouds, arrayed in light or gloom,
On Mona settle, and the shapes assume
Of all her peaks and ridges. What he draws
From sense, faith, reason, fancy, of the cause,
He will take with him to the silent tomb.
Or, by his fire, a child upon his knee,
Haply the untaught Philosopher may speak
Of the strange sight, nor hide his theory
That satisfies the simple and the meek,
Blest in their pious ignorance, though weak
To cope with Sages undevoutly free.

XIII

AT SEA OFF THE ISLE OF MAN

BOLD words affirmed, in days when faith was strong
And doubts and scruples seldom teased the brain,
That no adventurer's bark had power to gain
These shores if he approached them bent on wrong;
For, suddenly up-conjured from the Main,
Mists rose to hide the Land—that search, though long
And eager, might be still pursued in vain.
O Fancy, what an age was *that* for song!
That age, when not by *laws* inanimate,
As men believed, the waters were impelled,
The air controlled, the stars their courses held;
But element and orb on *acts* did wait
Of *Powers* endued with visible form, instinct
With will, and to their work by passion linked.

XIV

DESIRE we past illusions to recall?
To reinstate wild Fancy, would we hide
Truths whose thick veil Science has drawn aside?
No,—let this Age, high as she may, instal
In her esteem the thirst that wrought man's fall,
The universe is infinitely wide;
And conquering Reason, if self-glorified,
Can nowhere move uncrossed by some new wall
Or gulf of mystery, which thou alone,
Imaginative Faith! canst overleap,
In progress toward the fount of Love,—the throne
Of Power whose ministers the records keep

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[1] See "Excursion," seventh part; and "Ecclesiastical Sketches," second part, near the beginning.

Of periods fixed, and laws established, less
Flesh to exalt than prove its nothingness.

XV

ON ENTERING DOUGLAS BAY, ISLE OF MAN

"Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori."

THE feudal Keep, the bastions of Cohorn,
Even when they rose to check or to repel
Tides of aggressive war, oft served as well
Greedy ambition, armed to treat with scorn
Just limits; but yon Tower, whose smiles adorn
This perilous bay, stands clear of all offence;
Blest work it is of love and innocence,
A Tower of refuge built for the else forlorn.
Spare it, ye waves, and lift the mariner,
Struggling for life, into its saving arms!
Spare, too, the human helpers! Do they stir
'Mid your fierce shock like men afraid to die?
No; their dread service nerves the heart it warms,
And they are led by noble HILLARY.[1]

XVI

BY THE SEASHORE, ISLE OF MAN

WHY stand we gazing on the sparkling Brine,
With wonder smit by its transparency,
And all-enraptured with its purity?—
Because the unstained, the clear, the crystalline,
Have ever in them something of benign;
Whether in gem, in water, or in sky,
A sleeping infant's brow, or wakeful eye
Of a young maiden, only not divine.
Scarcely the hand forbears to dip its palm
For beverage drawn as from a mountain-well;
Temptation centres in the liquid Calm;
Our daily raiment seems no obstacle
To instantaneous plunging in, deep Sea!
And revelling in long embrace with thee.[2]

XVII

ISLE OF MAN

My son William is here the person alluded to as saving the life of the youth, and the circumstances were as mentioned in the Sonnet.

A YOUTH too certain of his power to wade
On the smooth bottom of this clear bright sea,
To sight so shallow, with a bather's glee
Leapt from this rock, and but for timely aid
He, by the alluring element betrayed,
Had perished. Then might Sea-nymphs (and with sighs
Of self-reproach) have chanted elegies
Bewailing his sad fate, when he was laid
In peaceful earth: for, doubtless, he was frank,
Utterly in himself devoid of guile;
Knew not the double-dealing of a smile;
Nor aught that makes men's promises a blank,
Or deadly snare: and He survives to bless
The Power that saved him in his strange distress.

XVIII

ISLE OF MAN

DID pangs of grief for lenient time too keen,
Grief that devouring waves had caused, or guilt
Which they had witnessed—sway the man who built
This Homestead, placed where nothing could be seen,
Nought heard, of ocean troubled or serene?
A tired Ship-soldier on paternal land,
That o'er the channel holds august command,
The dwelling raised,—a veteran Marine.
He, in disgust, turned from the neighbouring sea
To shun the memory of a listless life
That hung between two callings. May no strife
More hurtful here beset him, doomed though free,
Self-doomed, to worse inaction, till his eye
Shrink from the daily sight of earth and sky!

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[1] See Note.

[2] The sea-water on the coast of the Isle of Man is singularly pure and beautiful.

XIX

BY A RETIRED MARINER, H. H.

Mrs. Wordsworth's Brother Henry.

FROM early youth I ploughed the restless Main,
My mind as restless and as apt to change;
Through every clime and ocean did I range,
In hope at length a competence to gain;
For poor to Sea I went, and poor I still remain.
Year after year I strove, but strove in vain,
And hardships manifold did I endure,
For Fortune on me never deigned to smile;
Yet I at last a resting-place have found,
With just enough life's comforts to procure,
In a snug Cove on this our favoured Isle,
A peaceful spot where Nature's gifts abound;
Then sure I have no reason to complain,
Though poor to Sea I went, and poor I still remain.[1]

XX

AT BALA-SALA, ISLE OF MAN

Supposed to be written by a friend (Mr. Cookson) who died there a few years after.

BROKEN in fortune, but in mind entire
And sound in principle, I seek repose
Where ancient trees this convent-pile enclose,[2]
In ruin beautiful. When vain desire
Intrudes on peace, I pray the eternal Sire
To cast a soul-subduing shade on me,
A grey-haired, pensive, thankful Refugee;
A shade—but with some sparks of heavenly fire
Once to these cells vouchsafed. And when I note
The old Tower's brow yellowed as with the beams
Of sunset ever there, albeit streams
Of stormy weather-stains that semblance wrought,
I thank the silent Monitor, and say
"Shine so, my aged brow, at all hours of the day!"

XXI

TYNWALD HILL

Mr. Robinson and I walked the greater part of the way from Castle-town to Piel, and stopped some time at Tynwald Hill. One of my companions was an elderly man, who in a muddy way (for he was tipsy) explained and answered, as far as he could, my enquiries about this place and the ceremonies held here. I found more agreeable company in some little children; one of whom, upon my request, recited the Lord's Prayer to me, and I helped her to a clearer understanding of it as well as I could; but I was not at all satisfied with my own part; hers was much better done, and I am persuaded that, like other children, she knew more about it than she was able to express, especially to a stranger.

ONCE on the top of Tynwald's formal mound
(Still marked with green turf circles narrowing
Stage above stage) would sit this Island's King,
The laws to promulgate, enrobed and crowned:
While, compassing the little mount around,
Degrees and Orders stood, each under each:
Now, like to things within fate's easiest reach
The power is merged, the pomp a grave has found.
Off with yon cloud, old Snafell![3] that thine eye
Over three Realms may take its widest range;
And let, for them, thy fountains utter strange
Voices, thy winds break forth in prophecy,
If the whole State must suffer mortal change
Like Mona's miniature of sovereignty.

XXII

DESPOND who will—*I* heard a voice exclaim,
"Though fierce the assault, and shattered the defence,
It cannot be that Britain's social frame,
The glorious work of time and providence,
Before a flying season's rash pretence,
Should fall; that She, whose virtue put to shame,

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[1] See Note.

[2] Rushen Abbey.

[3] See Note.

When Europe prostrate lay, the Conqueror's aim,
Should perish, self-subverted. Black and dense
The cloud is; but brings *that* a day of doom.
To Liberty? Her sun is up the while,
That orb whose beams round Saxon Alfred shone:
Then laugh, ye innocent Vales! ye Streams, sweep on,
Nor let one billow of our heaven-blest Isle
Toss in the fanning wind a humbler plume."

XXIII

IN THE FRITH OF CLYDE, AILSA CRAG

DURING AN ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, JULY 17

The morning of the eclipse was exquisitely beautiful while we passed the Crag as described in the Sonnet. On the deck of the steamboat were several persons of the poor and labouring class, and I could not but be struck by their cheerful talk with each other, while not one of them seemed to notice the magnificent objects with which we were surrounded; and even the phenomenon of the eclipse attracted but little of their attention. Was it right not to regret this? They appeared to me, however, so much alive in their own minds to their own concerns that I could not look upon it as a misfortune that they had little perception for such pleasures as cannot be cultivated without ease and leisure. Yet if one surveys life in all its duties and relations, such ease and leisure will not be found so enviable a privilege as it may at first appear. Natural Philosophy, Painting, and Poetry, and refined taste, are no doubt great acquisitions to society; but among those who dedicate themselves to such pursuits it is to be feared that few are as happy, and as consistent in the management of their lives, as the class of persons who at that time led me into this course of reflection. I do not mean by this to be understood to derogate from intellectual pursuits, for that would be monstrous: I say it in deep gratitude for this compensation to those whose cares are limited to the necessities of daily life. Among them, self-tormentors so numerous in the higher classes of society, are rare.

SINCE risen from ocean, ocean to defy,
Appeared the crag of Ailsa, ne'er did morn
With gleaming lights more gracefully adorn
His sides, or wreathe with mist his forehead high:
Now, faintly darkening with the sun's eclipse,
Still is he seen, in lone sublimity,
Towering above the sea and little ships;
For dwarfs the tallest seem while sailing by,
Each for her haven; with her freight of Care,
Pleasure, or Grief, and Toil that seldom looks
Into the secret of to-morrow's fare;
Though poor, yet rich, without the wealth of books,
Or aught that watchful Love to Nature owes
For her mute Powers, fixed Forms, or transient Shows.

XXIV

ON THE FRITH OF CLYDE

IN A STEAMBOAT

The mountain outline on the north of this island, as seen from the Frith of Clyde, is much the finest I have ever noticed in Scotland or elsewhere.

ARRAN! a single-crested Teneriffe,
A St. Helena next—in shape and hue,
Varying her crowded peaks and ridges blue;
Who but must covet a cloud-seat, or skiff
Built for the air, or wingèd Hippogriff?
That he might fly, where no one could pursue,
From this dull Monster and her sooty crew;
And, as a God, light on thy topmost cliff.
Impotent wish! which reason would despise
If the mind knew no union of extremes,
No natural bond between the boldest schemes,
Ambition frames, and heart-humilities.
Beneath stern mountains many a soft vale lies,
And lofty springs give birth to lowly streams.

XXV

ON REVISITING DUNOLLY CASTLE[1]

See former series, "Yarrow Revisited," etc., p. 691.

THE captive Bird was gone;—to cliff or moor

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[1] See Note.

Perchance had flown, delivered by the storm;
Or he had pined, and sunk to feed the worm:
Him found we not: but, climbing, a tall tower,
There saw, impaved with rude fidelity
Of art mosaic, in a roofless floor,
An Eagle with stretched wings, but beamless eye—
An Eagle that could neither wail nor soar.
Effigy of the Vanished—(shall I dare
To call thee so?) or symbol of fierce deeds
And of the towering courage which past times
Rejoiced in—take, whate'er thou be, a share,
Not undeserved, of the memorial rhymes
That animate my way where'er it leads!

XXVI

THE DUNOLLY EAGLE

Not to the clouds, not to the cliff, he flew;
But when a storm, on sea or mountain bred,
Came and delivered him, alone he sped
Into the castle-dungeon's darkest mew.
Now, near his master's house in open view
He dwells, and hears indignant tempests howl,
Kennelled and chained. Ye tame domestic fowl,
Beware of him! Thou, saucy cockatoo,
Look to thy plumage and thy life!—The roe,
Fleet as the west wind, is for *him* no quarry;
Balanced in ether he will never tarry,
Eyeing the sea's blue depths. Poor Bird! even so
Doth man of brother man a creature make
That clings to slavery for its own sad sake.

XXVII

WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF MACPHERSON'S OSSIAN

The verses—

"Or strayed
From hope and promise, self-betrayed,"

were, I am sorry to say, suggested from apprehensions of the fate of my friend, H. C., the subject of the verses addressed to "H. C. when six years old.' The piece to "Memory" arose out of similar feelings.

Oft have I caught, upon a fitful breeze,
Fragments of far-off melodies,
With ear not coveting the whole,
A part so charmed the pensive soul.
While a dark storm before my sight
Was yielding, on a mountain height
Loose vapours have I watched, that won
Prismatic colours from the sun;
Nor felt a wish that heaven would show
The image of its perfect bow.
What need, then, of these finished Strains?
Away with counterfeit Remains!
An abbey in its lone recess,
A temple of the wilderness,
Wrecks though they be, announce with feeling
The majesty of honest dealing.
Spirit of Ossian! if imbound
In language thou may'st yet be found,
If aught (intrusted to the pen
Or floating on the tongues of men,
Albeit shattered and impaired)
Subsist thy dignity to guard,
In concert with memorial claim
Of old grey stone, and high-born name
That cleaves to rock or pillared cave
Where moans the blast, or beats the wave,
Let Truth, stern arbitress of all,
Interpret that Original,
And for presumptuous wrongs atone;—
Authentic words be given, or none!
Time is not blind;—yet He, who spares
Pyramid pointing to the stars,
Hath preyed with ruthless appetite
On all that marked the primal flight
Of the poetic ecstasy
Into the land of mystery.
No tongue is able to rehearse
One measure, Orpheus! of thy verse;
Musæus, stationed with his lyre
Supreme among the Elysian quire,
Is, for the dwellers upon earth,
Mute as a lark ere morning's birth.
Why grieve for these, though past away
The music, and extinct the lay?
When thousands, by severer doom,
Full early to the silent tomb
Have sunk, at Nature's call; or strayed
From hope and promise, self-betrayed;
The garland withering on their brows;
Stung with remorse for broken vows;

Frantic—else how might they rejoice?
And friendless, by their own sad choice!
Hail, Bards of mightier grasp! on you
I chiefly call, the chosen Few,
Who cast not off the acknowledged guide,
Who faltered not, nor turned aside;
Whose lofty genius could survive
Privation, under sorrow thrive;
In whom the fiery Muse revered
The symbol of a snow-white beard,
Bedewed with meditative tears
Dropped from the lenient cloud of years.
  Brothers in soul! though distant times
Produced you nursed in various climes,
Ye, when the orb of life had waned,
A plenitude of love retained:
Hence, while in you each sad regret
By corresponding hope was met,
Ye lingered among human kind,
Sweet voices for the passing wind,
Departing sunbeams, loth to stop,
Though smiling on the last hill top!
Such to the tender-hearted maid
Even ere her joys begin to fade;
Such, haply, to the rugged chief
By fortune crushed, or tamed by grief;
Appears, on Morven's lonely shore,
Dim-gleaming through imperfect lore,
The Son of Fingal; such was blind
Mæonides of ampler mind;
Such Milton, to the fountain head
Of glory by Urania led!

1827.

XXVIII

CAVE OF STAFFA[1]

We saw, but surely, in the motley crowd,
Not One of us has felt the far-famed sight;
How *could* we feel it? each the other's blight,
Hurried and hurrying, volatile and loud.
O for those motions only that invite
The Ghost of Fingal to his tuneful Cave
By the breeze entered, and wave after wave
Softly embosoming the timid light!
And by *one* Votary who at will might stand
Gazing and take into his mind and heart,
With undistracted reverence, the effect
Of those proportions where the almighty hand
That made the worlds, the sovereign Architect,
Has deigned to work as if with human Art!

XXIX

CAVE OF STAFFA

AFTER THE CROWD HAD DEPARTED

Thanks for the lessons of this Spot—fit school
For the presumptuous thoughts that would assign
Mechanic laws to agency divine;
And, measuring heaven by earth, would overrule
Infinite Power. The pillared vestibule,
Expanding yet precise, the roof embowed,
Might seem designed to humble man, when proud
Of his best workmanship by plan and tool.
Down-bearing with his whole Atlantic weight
Of tide and tempest on the Structure's base,
And flashing to that Structure's topmost height,
Ocean has proved its strength, and of its grace
In calms is conscious, finding for his freight
Of softest music some reponsive place.

XXX

CAVE OF STAFFA

Ye shadowy Beings, that have rights and claims
In every cell of Fingal's mystic Grot,
Where are ye? Driven or venturing to the spot,
Our fathers glimpses caught of your thin Frames,
And, by your mien and bearing knew your names;
And they could hear *his* ghostly song who trod
Earth, till the flesh lay on him like a load,
While he struck his desolate harp without hopes or aims.
Vanished ye are, but subject to recall;
Why keep *we* else the instincts whose dread law
Ruled here of yore, till what men felt they saw,

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[1] See Note.

Not by black arts but magic natural!
If eyes be still sworn vassals of belief,
Yon light shapes forth a Bard, that shade a Chief.

XXXI

FLOWERS ON THE TOP OF THE PILLARS AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE CAVE

HOPE smiled when your nativity was cast,
Children of Summer! Ye fresh Flowers that brave
What Summer here escapes not, the fierce wave,
And whole artillery of the western blast,
Battering the Temple's front, its long-drawn nave
Smiting, as if each moment were their last.
But ye, bright Flowers on frieze and architrave
Survive, and once again the Pile stands fast:
Calm as the Universe, from specular towers
Of heaven contemplated by Spirits pure
With mute astonishment, it stands sustained
Through every part in symmetry, to endure,
Unhurt, the assault of Time with all his hours,
As the supreme Artificer ordained.[1]

XXXII

IONA

ON to Iona!—What can she afford
To *us* save matter for a thoughtful sigh,
Heaved over ruin with stability
In urgent contrast? To diffuse the WORD
(Thy Paramount, mighty Nature! and Time's Lord)
Her Temples rose, 'mid pagan gloom; but why,
Even for a moment, has our verse deplored
Their wrongs, since they fulfilled their destiny?
And when, subjected to a common doom
Of mutability, those far-famed Piles
Shall disappear from both the sister Isles,
Iona's Saints, forgetting not past days,
Garlands shall wear of amaranthine bloom,
While heaven's vast sea of voices chants their praise.[1]

XXXIII

IONA

UPON LANDING

How sad a welcome! To each voyager
Some raggèd child holds up for sale a store
Of wave-worn pebbles, pleading on the shore
Where once came monk and nun with gentle stir,
Blessings to give, news ask, or suit prefer.
Yet is yon neat trim church a grateful speck
Of novelty amid the sacred wreck
Strewn far and wide. Think, proud Philosopher!
Fallen though she be, this Glory of the west,
Still on her sons, the beams of mercy shine;
And "hopes, perhaps more heavenly bright than thine,
A grace by thee unsought and unpossest,
A faith more fixed, a rapture more divine,
Shall gild their passage to eternal rest."

XXXIV

THE BLACK STONES OF IONA

See Martin's *Voyage among the Western Isles.*

HERE on their knees men swore: the stones were black,
Black in the people's minds and words, yet they
Were at that time, as now, in colour grey.
But what is colour, if upon the rack
Of conscience souls are placed by deeds that lack
Concord with oaths? What differ night and day
Then, when before the Perjured on his way
Hell opens, and the heavens in vengeance crack
Above his head uplifted in vain prayer
To Saint, or Fiend, or to the Godhead whom
He had insulted—Peasant, King, or Thane?
Fly where the culprit may, guilt meets a doom;
And, from invisible worlds at need laid bare,
Come links for social order's awful chain.

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[1] See Note.

XXXV

HOMEWARD we turn. Isle of Columba's Cell,
Where Christian piety's soul-cheering spark
(Kindled from Heaven between the light and dark
Of time) shone like the morning-star, farewell!—
And fare thee well, to Fancy visible,
Remote St. Kilda, lone and loved sea-mark
For many a voyage made in her swift bark,
When with more hues than in the rainbow dwell
Thou a mysterious intercourse dost hold,
Extracting from clear skies and air serene,
And out of sun-bright waves, a lucid veil,
That thickens, spreads, and, mingling fold with fold,
Makes known, when thou no longer canst be seen,
Thy whereabout, to warn the approaching sail.

XXXVI

GREENOCK

Per me si va nella Città dolente.

WE have not passed into a doleful City,
We who were led to-day down a grim dell,
By some too boldly named "the Jaws of Hell:"
Where be the wretched ones, the sights for pity?
These crowded streets resound no plaintive ditty:—
As from the hive where bees in summer dwell,
Sorrow seems here excluded; and that knell,
It neither damps the gay, nor checks the witty.
Alas! too busy Rival of old Tyre,
Whose merchants Princes were, whose decks were thrones;
Soon may the punctual sea in vain respire
To serve thy need, in union with that Clyde
Whose nursling current brawls o'er mossy stones,
The poor, the lonely, herdsman's joy and pride.

XXXVII

Mosgiel was thus pointed out to me by a young man on the top of the coach on my way from Glasgow to Kilmarnock. It is remarkable that, though Burns lived some time here, and during much the most productive period of his poetical life, he nowhere adverts to the splendid prospects stretching towards the sea and bounded by the peaks of Arran on one part, which in clear weather he must have had daily before his eyes. In one of his poetical effusions he speaks of describing "fair Nature's face" as a privilege on which he sets a high value; nevertheless, natural appearances rarely take a lead in his poetry. It is as a human being, eminently sensitive and intelligent, and not as a poet, clad in his priestly robes and carrying the ensigns of sacerdotal office, that he interests and affects us. Whether he speaks of rivers, hills, and woods, it is not so much on account of the properties with which they are absolutely endowed, as relatively to local patriotic remembrances and associations, or as they ministered to personal feelings, especially those of love, whether happy or otherwise;—yet it is not always so. Soon after we had passed Mosgiel Farm we crossed the Ayr, murmuring and winding through a narrow woody hollow. His line—"Auld hermit Ayr strays through his woods"—came at once to my mind with Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, and Doon,—Ayrshire streams over which he breathes a sigh as being unnamed in song; and surely his own attempts to make them known were as successful as his heart could desire.

"'THERE!" said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride
Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,
"Is Mosgiel Farm; and that's the very field
Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy." Far and wide
A plain below stretched seaward, while, descried
Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran rose;
And, by that simple notice, the repose
Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
Beneath "the random *bield* of clod or stone"
Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour
Have passed away; less happy than the One
That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died to prove
The tender charm of poetry and love.

XXXVIII

THE RIVER EDEN, CUMBERLAND

"Nature gives thee flowers that have no rivals among British bowers." This can scarcely be true to the letter; but, without stretching the point at all, I can say that the soil and air appear more congenial with many upon the banks of this river than I have observed in any other parts of Great Britain.

EDEN! till now thy beauty had I viewed
By glimpses only, and confess with shame
That verse of mine, whate'er its varying mood,
Repeats but once the sound of thy sweet name:
Yet fetched from Paradise[1] that honour came,
Rightfully borne; for Nature gives thee flowers
That have no rivals among British bowers;
And thy bold rocks are worthy of their fame.
Measuring thy course, fair Stream! at length I pay
To my life's neighbour dues of neighbourhood;
But I have traced thee on thy winding way
With pleasure sometimes by this thought restrained—
For things far off we toil, while many a good
Not sought, because too near, is never gained.

XXXIX

MONUMENT OF MRS. HOWARD

by Nollekens

IN WETHERAL CHURCH, NEAR CORBY, ON THE BANKS OF THE EDEN

Before this monument was put up in the Church at Wetheral, I saw it in the sculptor's studio. Nollekens, who, by the bye, was a strange and grotesque figure that interfered much with one's admiration of his works, showed me at the same time the various models in clay which he had made, one after another, of the Mother and her Infant: the improvement on each was surprising; and how so much grace, beauty, and tenderness had come out of such a head I was sadly puzzled to conceive. Upon a window-seat in his parlour lay two casts of faces, one of the Duchess of Devonshire, so noted in her day; and the other of Mr. Pitt, taken after his death, a ghastly resemblance, as these things always are, even when taken from the living subject, and more ghastly in this instance from the peculiarity of the features. The heedless and apparently neglectful manner in which the faces of these two persons were left—the one so distinguished in London Society, and the other upon whose counsels and public conduct, during a most momentous period, depended the fate of this great Empire and perhaps of all Europe—afforded a lesson to which the dullest of casual visitors could scarcely be insensible. It touched me the more because I had so often seen Mr. Pitt upon his own ground at Cambridge and upon the floor of the House of Commons.

STRETCHED on the dying Mother's lap, lies dead
Her new-born Babe; dire ending of bright hope!
But Sculpture here, with the divinest scope
Of luminous faith, heavenward hath raised that head
So patiently; and through one hand has spread
A touch so tender for the insensate Child—
(Earth's lingering love to parting reconciled,
Brief parting, for the spirit is all but fled)—
That we, who contemplate the turns of life
Through this still medium, are consoled and cheered;
Feel with he Mother, think the severed Wife
Is less to be lamented than revered;
And own that Art, triumphant over strife
And pain, hath powers to Eternity endeared.

XL

SUGGESTED BY THE FOREGOING

TRANQUILLITY! the sovereign aim wert thou
In heathen schools of philosophic lore;
Heart-stricken by stern destiny of yore
The Tragic Muse thee served with thoughtful vow;
And what of hope Elysium could allow
Was fondly seized by Sculpture, to restore
Peace to the Mourner. But when He who wore

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[1] See Note.

The crown of thorns around his bleeding brow
Warmed our sad being with celestial light,
Then Arts which still had drawn a softening grace
From shadowy fountains of the Infinite,
Communed with that Idea face to face:
And move around it now as planets run,
Each in its orbit round the central Sun.

XLI

NUNNERY

I became acquainted with the walks of Nunnery when a boy: they are within easy reach of a day's pleasant excursion from the town of Penrith, where I used to pass my summer holidays under the roof of my maternal Grandfather. The place is well worth visiting; though, within these few years, its privacy, and therefore the pleasure which the scene is so well fitted to give, has been injuriously affected by walks cut in the rocks on that side the stream which had been left in its natural state.

THE floods are roused, and will not soon be weary;
Down from the Pennine Alps[1] how fiercely sweeps
CROGLIN, the stately Eden's tributary!
He raves, or through some moody passage creeps
Plotting new mischief—out again he leaps
Into broad light, and sends, through regions airy,
That voice which soothed the Nuns while on the steeps
They knelt in prayer, or sang to blissful Mary.
That union ceased: then, cleaving easy walks
Through crags, and smoothing paths beset with danger,
Came studious Taste; and many a pensive stranger
Dreams on the banks, and to the river talks.
What change shall happen next to Nunnery Dell?
Canal, and Viaduct, and Railway, tell![2]

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[1] The chain of Crossfell.

[2] See Note.

XLII

STEAMBOATS, VIADUCTS, AND RAILWAYS

MOTIONS and Means, on land and sea at war
With old poetic feeling, not for this,
Shall ye, by Poets even, be judged amiss!
Nor shall your presence, howsoe'er it mar
The loveliness of Nature, prove a bar
To the Mind's gaining that prophetic sense
Of future change, that point of vision, whence
May be discovered what in soul ye are.
In spite of all that beauty may disown
In your harsh features, Nature doth embrace
Her lawful offspring in Man's art; and Time,
Pleased with your triumphs o'er his brother Space,
Accepts from your bold hands the proffered crown
Of hope, and smiles on you with cheer sublime.

XLIII

THE MONUMENT COMMONLY CALLED LONG MEG AND HER DAUGHTERS, NEAR THE RIVER EDEN

A WEIGHT of awe, not easy to be borne,
Fell suddenly upon my Spirit—cast
From the dread bosom of the unknown past,
When first I saw that family forlorn.
Speak Thou, whose massy strength and stature scorn
The power of years—pre-eminent, and placed
Apart, to overlook the circle vast—
Speak, Giant-mother! tell it to the Morn
While she dispels the cumbrous shades of Night;
Let the Moon hear, emerging from a cloud;
At whose behest uprose on British ground
That Sisterhood, in hieroglyphic round
Forth-shadowing, some have deemed, the infinite
The inviolable God, that tames the proud![3]

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[3] See Note.

XLIV

LOWTHER

"Cathedral pomp." It may be questioned whether this union was in the contemplation of the artist when he planned the edifice. However this might be, a poet may be excused for taking the view of the subject presented in this Sonnet.

LOWTHER! in thy majestic Pile are seen
Cathedral pomp and grace, in apt accord
With the baronial castle's sterner mien;
Union significant of God adored,
And charters won and guarded by the sword
Of ancient honour; whence that goodly state
Of polity which wise men venerate,
And will maintain, if God his help afford.
Hourly the democratic torrent swells;
For airy promises and hopes suborned
The strength of backward-looking thoughts is scorned.
Fall if ye must, ye Towers and Pinnacles,
With what ye symbolise; authentic Story
Will say, Ye disappeared with England's Glory!

XLV

TO THE EARL OF LONSDALE

"Magistratus indicat virum"

LONSDALE! it were unworthy of a Guest,
Whose heart with gratitude to thee inclines,
If he should speak, by fancy touched, of signs
On thy Abode harmoniously imprest,
Yet be unmoved with wishes to attest
How in thy mind and moral frame agree
Fortitude, and that Christian Charity
Which, filling, consecrates the human breast.
And if the Motto on thy 'scutcheon teach
With truth, "THE MAGISTRACY SHOWS THE MAN;"
That searching test thy public course has stood;
As will be owned alike by bad and good,
Soon as the measuring of life's little span
Shall place thy virtues out of Envy's reach.[1]

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[1] See Note.

XLVI

THE SOMNAMBULIST

This poem might be dedicated to my friends, Sir G. Beaumont and Mr. Rogers, jointly. While we were making an excursion together in this part of the Lake District we heard that Mr. Glover, the artist, while lodging at Lyulph's Tower, had been disturbed by a loud shriek, and upon rising he had learnt that it had come from a young woman in the house who was in the habit of walking in her sleep. In that state she had gone downstairs, and, while attempting to open the outer door, either from some difficulty or the effect of the cold stone upon her feet, had uttered the cry which alarmed him. It seemed to us all that this might serve as a hint for a poem, and the story here told was constructed and soon after put into verse by me as it now stands.

LIST, ye who pass by Lyulph's Tower[2]
At eve; how softly then
Doth Aira-force, that torrent hoarse,
Speak from the woody glen!
Fit music for a solemn vale!
And holier seems the ground
To him who catches on the gale
The spirit of a mournful tale,
Embodied in the sound.

Not far from that fair site whereon
The Pleasure-house is reared,
As story says, in antique days
A stern-browed house appeared;
Foil to a Jewel rich in light
There set, and guarded well;
Cage for a Bird of plumage bright,
Sweet-voiced, nor wishing for a flight
Beyond her native dell.

To win this bright Bird from her cage,
To make this Gem their own,
Came Barons bold, with store of gold,
And Knights of high renown;
But one She prized, and only one;
Sir Eglamore was he;
Full happy season, when was known,
Ye Dales and Hills! to you alone
Their mutual loyalty—

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[2] A pleasure-house built by the late Duke o
Norfolk upon the banks of Ullswater. FORCE i
the word used in the Lake District for Waterfall.

Known chiefly, Aira! to thy glen,
 Thy brook, and bowers of holly;
Where Passion caught what Nature taught,
 That all but love is folly;
Where Fact with Fancy stooped to play;
 Doubt came not, nor regret—
To trouble hours that winged their way,
As if through an immortal day
 Whose sun could never set.

But in old times Love dwelt not long
 Sequestered with repose;
Best throve the fire of chaste desire,
 Fanned by the breath of foes.
"A conquering lance is beauty's test,
 "And proves the Lover true;"
So spake Sir Eglamore, and pressed
The drooping Emma to his breast,
 And looked a blind adieu.

They parted.—Well with him it fared
 Through wide-spread regions errant;
A knight of proof in love's behoof,
 The thirst of fame his warrant:
And She her happiness can build
 On woman's quiet hours;
Though faint, compared with spear and shield,
The solace beads and masses yield,
 And needlework and flowers.

Yet blest was Emma when she heard
 Her Champion's praise recounted;
Though brain would swim, and eyes grow dim,
 And high her blushes mounted;
Or when a bold heroic lay
 She warbled from full heart;
Delightful blossoms for the *May*
Of absence! but they will not stay,
 Born only to depart.

Hope wanes with her, while lustre fills
 Whatever path he chooses;
As if his orb, that owns no curb,
 Received the light hers loses.
He comes not back; an ampler space
 Requires for nobler deeds;
He ranges on from place to place,
Till of his doings is no trace,
 But what her fancy breeds.

His fame may spread, but in the past
 Her spirit finds its centre;
Clear sight She has of what he was,
 And that would now content her.
"Still is he my devoted Knight?"
 The tear in answer flows;
Month falls on month with heavier weight;
Day sickens round her, and the night
 Is empty of repose.

In sleep She sometimes walked abroad,
 Deep sighs with quick words blending,
Like that pale Queen whose hands are seen
 With fancied spots contending;
But *she* is innocent of blood,—
 The moon is not more pure
That shines aloft, while through the wood
She thrids her way, the sounding Flood
 Her melancholy lure!

While 'mid the fern-brake sleeps the doe,
 And owls alone are waking,
In white arrayed, glides on the Maid
 The downward pathway taking,
That leads her to the torrent's side
 And to a holly bower;
By whom on this still night descried?
By whom in that lone place espied?
 By thee, Sir Eglamore!

A wandering Ghost, so thinks the Knight,
 His coming step has thwarted,
Beneath the boughs that heard their vows,
 Within whose shade they parted.
Hush, hush, the busy Sleeper see!
 Perplexed her fingers seem,
As if they from the holly tree
Green twigs would pluck, as rapidly
 Flung from her to the stream.

What means the Spectre? Why intent
 To violate the Tree,
Thought Eglamore, by which I swore,
 Unfading constancy?
Here am I, and to-morrow's sun,
 To her I left, shall prove
That bliss is ne'er so surely won
As when a circuit has been run
 Of valour, truth, and love.

So from the spot whereon he stood,
 He moved with stealthy pace;
And, drawing nigh, with his living eye,
 He recognised the face;
And whispers caught, and speeches small,
 Some to the green-leaved tree,

Some muttered to the torrent-fall ;—
" Roar on, and bring him with thy call ;
" I heard, and so may He ! "

Soul-shattered was the Knight, nor knew
If Emma's Ghost it were,
Or boding Shade, or if the Maid
Her very self stood there.
He touched ; what followed who shall tell ?
The soft touch snapped the thread
Of slumber—shrieking back she fell,
And the Stream whirled her down the dell
Along its foaming bed.

In plunged the Knight !—when on firm ground
The rescued Maiden lay,
Her eyes grew bright with blissful light,
Confusion passed away ;
She heard, ere to the throne of grace
Her faithful Spirit flew,
His voice—beheld his speaking face ;
And, dying, from his own embrace,
She felt that he was true.

So was he reconciled to life :
Brief words may speak the rest ;
Within the dell he built a cell,
And there was Sorrow's guest ;
In hermits' weeds repose he found,
From vain temptations free ;
Beside the torrent dwelling—bound
By one deep heart-controlling sound,
And awed to piety.

Wild stream of Aira, hold thy course,
Nor fear memorial lays,
Where clouds that spread in solemn shade,
Are edged with golden rays !
Dear art thou to the light of heaven,
Though minister of sorrow ;
Sweet is thy voice at pensive even ;
And thou, in lovers' hearts forgiven,
Shalt take thy place with Yarrow !

XLVII

TO CORDELIA M——

HALLSTEADS, ULLSWATER

Not in the mines beyond the western main,
You say, Cordelia, was the metal sought,
Which a fine skill, of Indian growth, has wrought
Into this flexible yet faithful Chain ;
Nor is it silver of romantic Spain
But from our loved Helvellyn's depths was brought,
Our own domestic mountain. Thing and thought
Mix strangely ; trifles light, and partly vain,
Can prop, as you have learnt, our nobler being :
Yes, Lady, while about your neck is wound
(Your casual glance oft meeting) this bright cord,
What witchery, for pure gifts of inward seeing,
Lurks in it, Memory's Helper, Fancy's Lord,
For precious tremblings in your bosom found !

XLVIII

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon ;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse :
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

COMPOSED BY THE SEASHORE

These lines were suggested during my residence under my Son's roof at Moresby, on the coast near Whitehaven, at the time when I was composing those verses among the "Evening Voluntaries" that have reference to the sea. It was in that neighbourhood I first became acquainted with the ocean and its appearances and movements. My infancy and early childhood were passed at Cockermouth, about eight miles from the coast, and I well remember that mysterious awe with which I used to listen to anything said about storms and shipwrecks. Sea-shells of many descriptions were common in the town; and I was not a little surprised when I heard that Mr. Landor had denounced me as a plagiarist from himself for having described a boy applying a sea-shell to his ear and listening to it for intimations of what was going on in its native element. This I had done myself scores of times, and it was a belief among us that we could know from the sound whether the tide was ebbing or flowing.

WHAT mischief cleaves to unsubdued regret,
How fancy sickens by vague hopes beset;
How baffled projects on the spirit prey,
And fruitless wishes eat the heart away,
The Sailor knows; he best, whose lot is cast
On the relentless sea that holds him fast
On chance dependent, and the fickle star
Of power, through long and melancholy war.
O sad it is, in sight of foreign shores,
Daily to think on old familiar doors,
Hearths loved in childhood, and ancestral floors;
Or, tossed about along a waste of foam,
To ruminate on that delightful home
Which with the dear Betrothèd *was* to come;
Or came and was and is, yet meets the eye
Never but in the world of memory;
Or in a dream recalled, whose smoothest range
Is crossed by knowledge, or by dread, of change,
And if not so, whose perfect joy makes sleep
A thing too bright for breathing man to keep.
Hail to the virtues which that perilous life
Extracts from Nature's elemental strife;
And welcome glory won in battles fought
As bravely as the foe was keenly sought.
But to each gallant Captain and his crew
A less imperious sympathy is due,
Such as my verse now yields, while moonbeams play
On the mute sea in this unruffled bay;
Such as will promptly flow from every breast,
Where good men, disappointed in the quest
Of wealth and power and honours, long for rest;
Or, having known the splendours of success,
Sigh for the obscurities of happiness.
1833.

"NOT IN THE LUCID INTERVALS OF LIFE"

The lines following "nor do words" were written with Lord Byron's character, as a poet, before me, and that of others, his contemporaries, who wrote under like influences.

NOT in the lucid intervals of life
That come but as a curse to party-strife;
Not in some hour when Pleasure with a sigh
Of languor puts his rosy garland by;
Not in the breathing-times of that poor slave
Who daily piles up wealth in Mammon's cave—
Is Nature felt, or can be; nor do words,
Which practised talent readily affords,
Prove that her hand has touched responsive chords;
Nor has her gentle beauty power to move
With genuine rapture and with fervent love
The soul of Genius, if he dare to take
Life's rule from passion craved for passion's sake;
Untaught that meekness is the cherished bent
Of all the truly great and all the innocent.
But who is innocent? By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature! we are thine,
Through good and evil thine, in just degree
Of rational and manly sympathy.
To all that Earth from pensive hearts is stealing,
And Heaven is now to gladdened eyes revealing,
Add every charm the Universe can show
Through every change its aspects undergo—
Care may be respited, but not repealed;
No perfect cure grows on that bounded field.
Vain is the pleasure, a false calm the peace,
If He, through whom alone our conflicts cease,

Our virtuous hopes without relapse advance,
Come not to speed the Soul's deliverance;
To the distempered Intellect refuse
His gracious help, or give what we abuse.
1834.

BY THE SIDE OF RYDAL MERE

The linnet's warble, sinking towards a close,
Hints to the thrush 'tis time for their repose;
The shrill-voiced thrush is heedless, and again
The monitor revives his own sweet strain;
But both will soon be mastered, and the copse
Be left as silent as the mountain-tops,
Ere some commanding star dismiss to rest
The throng of rooks, that now, from twig or nest,
(After a steady flight on home-bound wings,
And a last game of mazy hoverings
Around their ancient grove) with cawing noise
Disturb the liquid music's equipoise.
O Nightingale! Who ever heard thy song
Might here be moved, till Fancy grows so strong
That listening sense is pardonably cheated
Where wood or stream by thee was never greeted.
Surely, from fairest spots of favoured lands,
Were not some gifts withheld by jealous hands,
This hour of deepening darkness here would be
As a fresh morning for new harmony;
And lays as prompt would hail the dawn of Night:
A *dawn* she has both beautiful and bright,
When the East kindles with the full moon's light;
Not like the rising sun's impatient glow
Dazzling the mountains, but an overflow
Of solemn splendour, in mutation slow.
Wanderer by spring with gradual progress led,
For sway profoundly felt as widely spread;
To king, to peasant, to rough sailor, dear,
And to the soldier's trumpet-wearied ear;
How welcome wouldst thou be to this green Vale
Fairer than Tempe! Yet, sweet Nightingale!
From the warm breeze that bears thee on, alight
At will, and stay thy migratory flight;
Build, at thy choice, or sing, by pool or fount,
Who shall complain, or call thee to account?
The wisest, happiest, of our kind are they
That ever walk content with Nature's way,
God's goodness—measuring bounty as it may;
For whom the gravest thought of what they miss,
Chastening the fulness of a present bliss,
Is with that wholesome office satisfied,
While unrepining sadness is allied
In thankful bosoms to a modest pride.
1834.

"SOFT AS A CLOUD IS YON BLUE RIDGE"

Soft as a cloud is yon blue Ridge—the Mere
Seems firm as solid crystal, breathless, clear,
And motionless; and, to the gazer's eye,
Deeper than ocean, in the immensity
Of its vague mountains and unreal sky!
But, from the process in that still retreat,
Turn to minuter changes at our feet;
Observe how dewy Twilight has withdrawn
The crowd of daisies from the shaven lawn,
And has restored to view its tender green,
That, while the sun rode high, was los
beneath their dazzling sheen.
—An emblem this of what the sober Hour
Can do for minds disposed to feel its power
Thus oft, when we in vain have wishe
away
The petty pleasures of the garish day,
Meek eve shuts up the whole usurpin
host
(Unbashful dwarfs each glittering at hi
post)
And leaves the disencumbered spirit free
To reassume a staid simplicity.
'Tis well—but what are helps of tim
and place,

When wisdom stands in need of nature's grace;
Why do good thoughts, invoked or not, descend,
Like Angels from their bowers, our virtues to befriend;
If yet To-morrow, unbelied, may say,
"I come to open out, for fresh display,
The elastic vanities of yesterday"?

1834.

"THE LEAVES THAT RUSTLED ON THIS OAK-CROWNED HILL"

Composed by the side of Grasmere lake. The mountains that enclose the vale, especially towards Easdale, are most favourable to the reverberation of sound. There is a passage in the "Excursion," towards the close of the fourth book, where the voice of the raven in flight is traced through the modifications it undergoes, as I have often heard it in that vale and others of this district.

> "Often, at the hour
> When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
> Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
> One voice—the solitary raven."

THE leaves that rustled on this oak-crowned hill,
And sky that danced among those leaves, are still;
Rest smooths the way for sleep; in field and bower
Soft shades and dews have shed their blended power
On drooping eyelid and the closing flower;
Sound is there none at which the faintest heart
Might leap, the weakest nerve of superstition start;
Save when the Owlet's unexpected scream
Pierces the ethereal vault; and ('mid the gleam
Of unsubstantial imagery, the dream,
From the hushed vale's realities, transferred
To the still lake) the imaginative Bird
Seems, 'mid inverted mountains, not unheard.
Grave Creature!—whether, while the moon shines bright
On thy wings opened wide for smoothest flight,
Thou art discovered in a roofless tower,
Rising from what may once have been a lady's bower;
Or spied where thou sitt'st moping in thy mew
At the dim centre of a churchyard yew;
Or, from a rifted crag or ivy tod
Deep in a forest, thy secure abode,
Thou giv'st, for pastime's sake, by shriek or shout,
A puzzling notice of thy whereabout—
May the night never come, nor day be seen,
When I shall scorn thy voice or mock thy mien!
In classic ages men perceived a soul
Of sapience in thy aspect, headless Owl!
Thee Athens reverenced in the studious grove;
And, near the golden sceptre grasped by Jove,
His Eagle's favourite perch, while round him sate
The Gods revolving the decrees of Fate,
Thou, too, wert present at Minerva's side:—
Hark to that second larum!—far and wide
The elements have heard, and rock and cave replied.

1834.

THE LABOURER'S NOON-DAY HYMN

Bishop Ken's Morning and Evening Hymns are, as they deserve to be, familiarly known. Many other hymns have also been written on the same subject; but, not being aware of any being designed for noon-day, I was induced to compose these verses. Often one has occasion to observe cottage children carrying, in their baskets, dinner to their Fathers engaged with their daily labours in the fields and woods. How gratifying would it be to me could I be assured that any portion of these stanzas had been sung by such a domestic concert under such circumstances. A friend of mine has told me that she introduced this Hymn into a village-school which she superintended, and the stanzas in succession furnished her with texts to comment upon in a way which without difficulty was made intelligible to the children, and in which they obviously took delight, and they were taught to sing it to the tune of the old 100th Psalm.

UP to the throne of God is borne
The voice of praise at early morn,
And he accepts the punctual hymn
Sung as the light of day grows dim:

Nor will he turn his ear aside
From holy offerings at noontide:
Then here reposing let us raise
A song of gratitude and praise.

What though our burthen be not light,
We need not toil from morn to night;
The respite of the mid-day hour
Is in the thankful Creature's power.

Blest are the moments, doubly blest,
That, drawn from this one hour of rest,
Are with a ready heart bestowed
Upon the service of our God!

Each field is then a hallowed spot,
An altar is in each man's cot,
A church in every grove that spreads
Its living roof above our heads.

Look up to Heaven! the industrious Sun
Already half his race hath run;
He cannot halt nor go astray,
But our immortal Spirits may.

Lord! since his rising in the East,
If we have faltered or transgressed,
Guide, from thy love's abundant source,
What yet remains of this day's course:

Help with thy grace, through life's short day,
Our upward and our downward way;
And glorify for us the west,
When we shall sink to final rest. 1834.

THE REDBREAST

SUGGESTED IN A WESTMORELAND COTTAGE

Written at Rydal Mount. All our cats having been banished the house, it was soon frequented by redbreasts. Two or three of them, when the window was open, would come in, particularly when Mrs. Wordsworth was breakfasting alone, and hop about the table picking up the crumbs. My sister being then confined to her room by sickness, as, dear creature, she still is, had one that, without being caged, took up its abode with her, and at night used to perch upon a nail from which a picture had hung. It used to sing and fan her face with its wings in a manner that was very touching.

Driven in by Autumn's sharpening air
From half-stripped woods and pastures bare,
Brisk Robin seeks a kindlier home:
Not like a beggar is he come,
But enters as a looked-for guest,
Confiding in his ruddy breast,
As if it were a natural shield
Charged with a blazon on the field,
Due to that good and pious deed
Of which we in the Ballad read.
But pensive fancies putting by,
And wild-wood sorrows, speedily
He plays the expert ventriloquist;
And, caught by glimpses now—now missed
Puzzles the listener with a doubt
If the soft voice he throws about
Comes from within doors or without!
Was ever such a sweet confusion,
Sustained by delicate illusion?
He's at your elbow—to your feeling
The notes are from the floor or ceiling;
And there's a riddle to be guessed,
'Till you have marked his heaving chest,
And busy throat whose sink and swell,
Betray the Elf that loves to dwell
In Robin's bosom, as a chosen cell.
 Heart-pleased we smile upon the Bird
If seen, and with like pleasure stirred
Commend him, when he's only heard.
But small and fugitive our gain
Compared with *hers* who long hath lain,
With languid limbs and patient head
Reposing on a lone sick-bed;
Where now, she daily hears a strain
That cheats her of too busy cares,
Eases her pain, and helps her prayers.
And who but this dear Bird beguiled
The fever of that pale-faced Child;
Now cooling, with his passing wing,
Her forehead, like a breeze of Spring:
Recalling now, with descant soft
Shed round her pillow from aloft,
Sweet thoughts of angels hovering nigh,
And the invisible sympathy
Of "Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John
Blessing the bed she lies upon"?[1]
And sometimes, just as listening ends
In slumber, with the cadence blends
A dream of that low-warbled hymn
Which old folk, fondly pleased to trim

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[1] The words—

> "Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
> Bless the bed that I lie on,"

are part of a child's prayer, still in general us
through the northern counties.

Lamps of faith, now burning dim,
Say that the Cherubs carved in stone,
When clouds gave way at dead of night
And the ancient church was filled with light,
Used to sing in heavenly tone,
Above and round the sacred places
They guard, with wingèd baby-faces.
  Thrice happy Creature! in all lands
Nurtured by hospitable hands:
Free entrance to this cot has he,
Entrance and exit both *yet* free;
And, when the keen unruffled weather
That thus brings man and bird together,
Shall with its pleasantness be past,
And casement closed and door made fast,
To keep at bay the howling blast,
He needs not fear the season's rage,
For the whole house is Robin's cage.
Whether the bird flit here or there,
O'er table *lilt*, or perch on chair,
Though some may frown and make a stir,
To scare him as a trespasser,
And he belike will flinch or start,
Good friends he has to take his part;
One chiefly, who with voice and look
Pleads for him from the chimney-nook,
Where sits the Dame, and wears away
Her long and vacant holiday;
With images about her heart,
Reflected from the years gone by,
On human nature's second infancy.

1834.

LINES

SUGGESTED BY A PORTRAIT FROM THE PENCIL OF F. STONE

This Portrait has hung for many years in our principal sitting-room, and represents J. Q. as she was when a girl. The picture, though it is somewhat thinly painted, has much merit in tone and general effect: it is chiefly valuable, however, from the sentiment that pervades it. The Anecdote of the saying of the Monk in sight of Titian's picture was told in this house by Mr. Wilkie, and was, I believe, first communicated to the public in this poem, the former portion of which I was composing at the time. Southey heard the story from Miss Hutchinson, and transferred it to the "Doctor"; but it is not easy to explain how my friend Mr. Rogers, in a note subsequently added to his "Italy," was led to speak of the same remarkable words having many years before been spoken in his hearing by a monk or priest in front of a picture of the Last Supper, placed over a Refectory-table in a convent at Padua.

Beguiled into forgetfulness of care
Due to the day's unfinished task; of pen
Or book regardless, and of that fair scene
In Nature's prodigality displayed
Before my window, oftentimes and long
I gaze upon a Portrait whose mild gleam
Of beauty never ceases to enrich
The common light; whose stillness charms the air,
Or seems to charm it, into like repose;
Whose silence, for the pleasure of the ear,
Surpasses sweetest music. There she sits
With emblematic purity attired
In a white vest, white as her marble neck
Is, and the pillar of the throat would be
But for the shadow by the drooping chin
Cast into that recess—the tender shade,
The shade and light, both there and everywhere,
And through the very atmosphere she breathes,
Broad, clear, and toned harmoniously, with skill
That might from nature have been learnt in the hour
When the lone shepherd sees the morning spread
Upon the mountains. Look at her, whoe'er
Thou be that, kindling with a poet's soul,
Hast loved the painter's true Promethean craft
Intensely—from Imagination take
The treasure,—what mine eyes behold, see thou,
Even though the Atlantic ocean roll between.
  A silver line, that runs from brow to crown
And in the middle parts the braided hair,
Just serves to show how delicate a soil
The golden harvest grows in; and those eyes,
Soft and capacious as a cloudless sky
Whose azure depth their colour emulates,
Must needs be conversant with upward looks,
Prayer's voiceless service; but now, seeking nought
And shunning nought, their own peculiar life
Of motion they renounce, and with the head

Partake its inclination towards earth
In humble grace, and quiet pensiveness
Caught at the point where it stops short of sadness.
  Offspring of soul-bewitching Art, make me
Thy confidant! say, whence derived that air
Of calm abstraction? Can the ruling thought
Be with some lover far away, or one
Crossed by misfortune, or of doubted faith?
Inapt conjecture! Childhood here, a moon
Crescent in simple loveliness serene,
Has but approached the gates of womanhood,
Not entered them; her heart is yet unpierced
By the blind Archer-god; her fancy free:
The fount of feeling if unsought elsewhere,
Will not be found.
                Her right hand, as it lies
Across the slender wrist of the left arm
Upon her lap reposing, holds—but mark
How slackly, for the absent mind permits
No firmer grasp—a little wild-flower, joined
As in a posy, with a few pale ears
Of yellowing corn, the same that overtopped
And in their common birthplace sheltered it
'Till they were plucked together; a blue flower
Called by the thrifty husbandman a weed;
But Ceres, in her garland, might have worn
That ornament, unblamed. The floweret, held
In scarcely conscious fingers, was, she knows,
(Her Father told her so) in youth's gay dawn
Her Mother's favourite; and the orphan Girl,
In her own dawn—a dawn less gay and bright,
Loves it, while there in solitary peace
She sits, for that departed Mother's sake.
—Not from a source less sacred is derived
(Surely I do not err) that pensive air
Of calm abstraction through the face diffused
And the whole person.
                Words have something told
More than the pencil can, and verily
More than is needed, but the precious Art
Forgives their interference—Art divine,
That both creates and fixes, in despite
Of Death and Time, the marvels it hat
wrought.
  Strange contrasts have we in this worl
of ours!
That posture, and the look of filial love
Thinking of past and gone, with what
left
Dearly united, might be swept away
From this fair Portrait's fleshly Archetype,
Even by an innocent fancy's slightest frea
Banished, nor ever, haply, be restored
To their lost place, or meet in harmony
So exquisite; but *here* do they abide,
Enshrined for ages. Is not then the Art
Godlike, a humble branch of the divine,
In visible quest of immortality,
Stretched forth with trembling hope?—I
every realm,
From high Gibraltar to Siberian plains,
Thousands, in each variety of tongue
That Europe knows, would echo thi
appeal;
One above all, a Monk who waits on God
In the magnific Convent built of yore
To sanctify the Escurial palace. He—
Guiding, from cell to cell and room t
room,
A British Painter (eminent for truth
In character, and depth of feeling, shown
By labours that have touched the hearts
kings,
And are endeared to simple cottagers)—
Came, in that service, to a glorious work,
Our Lord's Last Supper, beautiful as whe
first
The appropriate Picture, fresh from Titian'
hand,
Graced the Refectory: and there, whil
both
Stood with eyes fixed upon that maste
piece,
The hoary Father in the Stranger's ear
Breathed out these words:—"Here dail
do we sit,
Thanks given to God for daily bread, an
here
Pondering the mischiefs of these restle
times,
And thinking of my Brethren, dead, di
persed,
Or changed and changing, I not seldo
gaze

Upon this solemn Company unmoved
By shock of circumstance, or lapse of years,
Until I cannot but believe that they—
They are in truth the Substance, we the Shadows."
So spake the mild Jeronymite, his griefs
Melting away within him like a dream
Ere he had ceased to gaze, perhaps to speak:
And I, grown old, but in a happier land,
Domestic Portrait! have to verse consigned
In thy calm presence those heart-moving words:
Words that can soothe, more than they agitate;
Whose spirit, like the angel that went down
Into Bethesda's pool, with healing virtue
Informs the fountain in the human breast
Which by the visitation was disturbed.
—But why this stealing tear? Companion mute,
On thee I look, not sorrowing; fare thee well,
My Song's Inspirer, once again farewell![1]
1834.

THE FOREGOING SUBJECT RESUMED

Among a grave fraternity of Monks,
For One, but surely not for One alone,
Triumphs, in that great work, the Painter's skill,
Humbling the body, to exalt the soul;
Yet representing, amid wreck and wrong
And dissolution and decay, the warm
And breathing life of flesh, as if already
Clothed with impassive majesty, and graced
With no mean earnest of a heritage
Assigned to it in future worlds. Thou, too,
With thy memorial flower, meek Portraiture!
From whose serene companionship I passed
Pursued by thoughts that haunt me still; thou also—
Though but a simple object, into light
Called forth by those affections that endear
The private hearth; though keeping thy sole seat
In singleness, and little tried by time,
Creation, as it were, of yesterday—
With a congenial function art endued
For each and all of us, together joined
In course of nature under a low roof
By charities and duties that proceed
Out of the bosom of a wiser vow.
To a like salutary sense of awe
Or sacred wonder, growing with the power
Of meditation that attempts to weigh,
In faithful scales, things and their opposites,
Can thy enduring quiet gently raise
A household small and sensitive,—whose love,
Dependent as in part its blessings are
Upon frail ties dissolving or dissolved
On earth, will be revived, we trust, in heaven.[1]
1834.

TO A CHILD

WRITTEN IN HER ALBUM

This quatrain was extempore on observing this image, as I had often done, on the lawn of Rydal Mount. It was first written down in the Album of my God-daughter, Rotha Quillinan.

Small service is true service while it lasts:
Of humblest Friends, bright Creature! scorn not one:
The Daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dew-drop from the Sun.
1834.

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[1] The pile of buildings, composing the palace and convent of San Lorenzo, has, in common usage, lost its proper name in that of the *Escurial*, a village at the foot of the hill upon which the splendid edifice, built by Philip the Second, stands. It need scarcely be added, that Wilkie is the painter alluded to.

[1] In the class entitled "Musings" in Mr. Southey's Minor Poems, is one upon his own miniature Picture, taken in childhood, and another upon a landscape painted by Gaspar Poussin. It is possible that every word of the above verses, though similar in subject, might have been written had the author been unacquainted with those beautiful effusions of poetic sentiment. But, for his own satisfaction, he must be allowed thus publicly to acknowledge the pleasure those two Poems of his Friend have given him, and the grateful influence they have upon his mind as often as he reads them, or thinks of them.

LINES

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF THE COUNTESS OF LONSDALE. NOV. 5, 1834

This is a faithful picture of that amiable Lady, as she then was. The youthfulness of figure and demeanour and habits, which she retained in almost unprecedented degree, departed a very few years after, and she died without violent disease by gradual decay before she reached the period of old age.

LADY! a Pen (perhaps with thy regard,
Among the Favoured, favoured not the least)
Left, 'mid the Records of this Book inscribed,
Deliberate traces, registers of thought
And feeling, suited to the place and time
That gave them birth:—months passed, and still this hand,
That had not been too timid to imprint
Words which the virtues of thy Lord inspired,
Was yet not bold enough to write of Thee.
And why that scrupulous reserve? In sooth
The blameless cause lay in the Theme itself.
Flowers are there many that delight to strive
With the sharp wind, and seem to court the shower,
Yet are by nature careless of the sun
Whether he shine on them or not; and some,
Where'er he moves along the unclouded sky,
Turn a broad front full on his flattering beams:
Others do rather from their notice shrink,
Loving the dewy shade,—a humble band,
Modest and sweet, a progeny of earth,
Congenial with thy mind and character,
High-born Augusta!
 Witness, Towers and Groves!
And Thou, wild Stream, that giv'st the honoured name
Of Lowther to this ancient Line, bear witness
From thy most secret haunts; and ye Parterres,
Which She is pleased and proud to call her own,
Witness how oft upon my noble Friend
Mute offerings, tribute from an inward sense
Of admiration and respectful love,
Have waited—till the affections could no more
Endure that silence, and broke out in song,
Snatches of music taken up and dropt
Like those self-solacing, those under, notes
Trilled by the redbreast, when autumna leaves
Are thin upon the bough. Mine, only mine,
The pleasure was, and no one heard th praise,
Checked, in the moment of its issue checked
And reprehended, by a fancied blush
From the pure qualities that called it forth.
 Thus Virtue lives debarred from Virtue's meed;
Thus, Lady, is retiredness a veil
That, while it only spreads a softening charm
O'er features looked at by discerning eyes,
Hides half their beauty from the commo gaze;
And thus, even on the exposed and breezy hill
Of lofty station, female goodness walks,
When side by side with lunar gentleness,
As in a cloister. Yet the grateful Poor
(Such the immunities of low estate,
Plain Nature's enviable privilege,
Her sacred recompence for many wants
Open their hearts before Thee, pourin out
All that they think and feel, with tears o joy;
And benedictions not unheard in heaven:
And friend in the ear of friend, when speech is free
To follow truth, is eloquent as they.
 Then let the Book receive in these promp lines
A just memorial; and thine eyes consent
To read that they, who mark thy course behold
A life declining with the golden light
Of summer, in the season of sere leaves;
See cheerfulness undamped by stealin Time;
See studied kindness flow with easy stream
Illustrated with inborn courtesy;

And an habitual disregard of self
Balanced by vigilance for others' weal.
And shall the Verse not tell of lighter gifts
With these ennobling attributes conjoined
And blended, in peculiar harmony,
By Youth's surviving spirit? What agile grace!
A nymph-like liberty, in nymph-like form,
Beheld with wonder; whether floor or path
Thou tread; or sweep—borne on the managed steed—
Fleet as the shadows, over down or field,
Driven by strong winds at play among the clouds.
Yet one word more—one farewell word—a wish
Which came, but it has passed into a prayer—
That, as thy sun in brightness is declining,
So—at an hour yet distant for *their* sakes
Whose tender love, here faltering on the way
Of a diviner love, will be forgiven—
So may it set in peace, to rise again
For everlasting glory won by faith.

TO THE MOON

COMPOSED BY THE SEASIDE,—ON THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND

WANDERER! that stoop'st so low, and com'st so near
To human life's unsettled atmosphere;
Who lov'st with Night and Silence to partake,
So might it seem, the cares of them that wake;
And, through the cottage-lattice softly peeping,
Dost shield from harm the humblest of the sleeping;
What pleasure once encompassed those sweet names
Which yet in thy behalf the Poet claims,
An idolizing dreamer as of yore!—
I slight them all; and, on this sea-beat shore
Sole-sitting, only can to thoughts attend
That bid me hail thee as the SAILOR'S FRIEND;
So call thee for heaven's grace through thee made known
By confidence supplied and mercy shown,
When not a twinkling star or beacon's light
Abates the perils of a stormy night;
And for less obvious benefits, that find
Their way, with thy pure help, to heart and mind;
Both for the adventurer starting in life's prime;
And veteran ranging round from clime to clime,
Long-baffled hope's slow fever in his veins,
And wounds and weakness oft his labour's sole remains.
The aspiring Mountains and the winding Streams,
Empress of Night! are gladdened by thy beams;
A look of thine the wilderness pervades,
And penetrates the forest's inmost shades;
Thou, chequering peaceably the minster's gloom,
Guid'st the pale Mourner to the lost one's tomb;
Canst reach the Prisoner—to his grated cell
Welcome, though silent and intangible!—
And lives there one, of all that come and go
On the great waters toiling to and fro,
One, who has watched thee at some quiet hour
Enthroned aloft in undisputed power,
Or crossed by vapoury streaks and clouds that move
Catching the lustre they in part reprove—
Nor sometimes felt a fitness in thy sway
To call up thoughts that shun the glare of day,
And make the serious happier than the gay?
Yes, lovely Moon! if thou so mildly bright
Dost rouse, yet surely in thy own despite,
To fiercer mood the phrenzy-stricken brain,
Let me a compensating faith maintain;
That there's a sensitive, a tender, part
Which thou canst touch in every human heart,
For healing and composure.—But, as least
And mightiest billows ever have confessed
Thy domination; as the whole vast Sea
Feels through her lowest depths thy sovereignty;
So shines that countenance with especial grace
On them who urge the keel her *plains* to trace

Furrowing its way right onward. The most rude,
Cut off from home and country, may have stood—
Even till long gazing hath bedimmed his eye,
Or the mute rapture ended in a sigh—
Touched by accordance of thy placid cheer,
With some internal lights to memory dear,
Or fancies stealing forth to soothe the breast
Tired with its daily share of earth's unrest,—
Gentle awakenings, visitations meek;
A kindly influence whereof few will speak,
Though it can wet with tears the hardiest cheek.
And when thy beauty in the shadowy cave
Is hidden, buried in its monthly grave;
Then, while the Sailor, 'mid an open sea
Swept by a favouring wind that leaves thought free,
Paces the deck—no star perhaps in sight,
And nothing save the moving ship's own light
To cheer the long dark hours of vacant night—
Oft with his musings does thy image blend,
In his mind's eye thy crescent horns ascend,
And thou art still, O Moon, that SAILOR'S FRIEND!

1835.

TO THE MOON

RYDAL

QUEEN of the stars!—so gentle, so benign,
That ancient Fable did to thee assign,
When darkness creeping o'er thy silver brow
Warned thee these upper regions to forego,
Alternate empire in the shades below—
A Bard, who, lately near the wide-spread sea
Traversed by gleaming ships, looked up to thee
With grateful thoughts, doth now thy rising hail
From the close confines of a shadowy vale.
Glory of night, conspicuous yet serene,
Nor less attractive when by glimpses seen
Through cloudy umbrage, well might that fair face,
And all those attributes of modest grace,
In days when Fancy wrought unchecked by fear,
Down to the green earth fetch thee from thy sphere,
To sit in leafy woods by fountains clear!
O still beloved (for thine, meek Power, are charms
That fascinate the very Babe in arms,
While he, uplifted towards thee, laughs outright,
Spreading his little palms in his glad Mother's sight)
O still beloved, once worshipped! Time, that frowns
In his destructive flight on earthly crowns,
Spares thy mild splendour; still those far-shot beams
Tremble on dancing waves and rippling streams
With stainless touch, as chaste as when thy praise
Was sung by Virgin-choirs in festal lays;
And through dark trials still dost thou explore
Thy way for increase punctual as of yore,
When teeming Matrons—yielding to rude faith
In mysteries of birth and life and death
And painful struggle and deliverance—prayed
Of thee to visit them with lenient aid.
What though the rites be swept away, the fanes
Extinct that echoed to the votive strains;
Yet thy mild aspect does not, cannot, cease
Love to promote and purity and peace;
And Fancy, unreproved, even yet may trace
Faint types of suffering in thy beamless face.
Then, silent Monitress! let us—not blind
To worlds unthought of till the searching mind
Of Science laid them open to mankind—
Told, also, how the voiceless heavens declare
God's glory; and acknowledging thy share
In that blest charge; let us—without offence
To aught of highest, holiest, influence—
Receive whatever good 'tis given thee to dispense.
May sage and simple, catching with one eye
The moral intimations of the sky,
Learn from thy course, where'er their own be taken,

"To look on tempests, and be never shaken;"
To keep with faithful step the appointed way
Eclipsing or eclipsed, by night or day,
And from example of thy monthly range
Gently to brook decline and fatal change;
Meek, patient, stedfast, and with loftier scope,
Than thy revival yields, for gladsome hope!

1835.

WRITTEN AFTER THE DEATH OF CHARLES LAMB

Light will be thrown upon the tragic circumstance alluded to in this poem when, after the death of Charles Lamb's Sister, his biographer, Mr. Sergeant Talfourd, shall be at liberty to relate particulars which could not, at the time his Memoir was written, be given to the public. Mary Lamb was ten years older than her brother, and has survived him as long a time. Were I to give way to my own feelings, I should dwell not only on her genius and intellectual powers, but upon the delicacy and refinement of manner which she maintained inviolable under most trying circumstances. She was loved and honoured by all her brother's friends; and others, some of them strange characters, whom his philanthropic peculiarities induced him to countenance. The death of C. Lamb himself was doubtless hastened by his sorrow for that of Coleridge, to whom he had been attached from the time of their being school-fellows at Christ's Hospital. Lamb was a good Latin scholar, and probably would have gone to college upon one of the school foundations but for the impediment in his speech. Had such been his lot, he would most likely have been preserved from the indulgences of social humours and fancies which were often injurious to himself, and causes of severe regret to his friends, without really benefiting the object of his misapplied kindness.

To a good Man of most dear memory
This Stone is sacred. Here he lies apart
From the great city where he first drew breath,
Was reared and taught; and humbly earned his bread,
To the strict labours of the merchant's desk
By duty chained. Not seldom did those tasks
Tease, and the thought of time so spent depress,
His spirit, but the recompence was high;
Firm Independence, Bounty's rightful sire;
Affections, warm as sunshine, free as air;
And when the precious hours of leisure came,
Knowledge and wisdom, gained from converse sweet
With books, or while he ranged the crowded streets
With a keen eye, and overflowing heart:
So genius triumphed over seeming wrong,
And poured out truth in works by thoughtful love
Inspired—works potent over smiles and tears.
And as round mountain-tops the lightning plays,
Thus innocently sported, breaking forth
As from a cloud of some grave sympathy,
Humour and wild instinctive wit, and all
The vivid flashes of his spoken words.
From the most gentle creature nursed in fields[1]
Had been derived the name he bore—a name,
Wherever Christian altars have been raised,
Hallowed to meekness and to innocence;
And if in him meekness at times gave way,
Provoked out of herself by troubles strange,
Many and strange, that hung about his life;
Still, at the centre of his being, lodged
A soul by resignation sanctified:
And if too often, self-reproached, he felt
That innocence belongs not to our kind,
A power that never ceased to abide in him,
Charity, 'mid the multitude of sins
That she can cover, left not his exposed
To an unforgiving judgment from just Heaven.
Oh, he was good, if e'er a good Man lived!

* * * * * * *

From a reflecting mind and sorrowing heart
Those simple lines flowed with an earnest wish,
Though but a doubting hope, that they might serve
Fitly to guard the precious dust of him
Whose virtues called them forth. That aim is missed;
For much that truth most urgently required
Had from a faltering pen been asked in vain:
Yet, haply, on the printed page received,

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[1] See Note.

The imperfect record, there, may stand unblamed
As long as verse of mine shall breathe the air
Of memory, or see the light of love.
  Thou wert a scorner of the fields, my Friend,
But more in show than truth; and from the fields,
And from the mountains, to thy rural grave
Transported, my soothed spirit hovers o'er
Its green untrodden turf, and blowing flowers;
And taking up a voice shall speak (tho' still
Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity
Which words less free presumed not even to touch)
Of that fraternal love, whose heaven-lit lamp
From infancy, through manhood, to the last
Of threescore years, and to thy latest hour,
Burnt on with ever-strengthening light, enshrined
Within thy bosom.
                "Wonderful" hath been
The love established between man and man,
"Passing the love of women;" and between
Man and his help-mate in fast wedlock joined
Through God, is raised a spirit and soul of love
Without whose blissful influence Paradise
Had been no Paradise; and earth were now
A waste where creatures bearing human form,
Direst of savage beasts, would roam in fear,
Joyless and comfortless. Our days glide on;
And let him grieve who cannot choose but grieve
That he hath been an Elm without his Vine,
And her bright dower of clustering charities,
That, round his trunk and branches, might have clung
Enriching and adorning. Unto thee,
Not so enriched, not so adorned, to thee
Was given (say rather, thou of later birth
Wert given to her) a Sister—'tis a word
Timidly uttered, for she *lives*, the meek,
The self-restraining, and the ever-kind;
In whom thy reason and intelligent heart
Found—for all interests, hopes, and tender cares,
All softening, humanising, hallowing powers,
Whether withheld, or for her sake unsought—
More than sufficient recompence!
                Her love
(What weakness prompts the voice to tell it here?)
Was as the love of mothers; and when years,
Lifting the boy to man's estate, had called
The long-protected to assume the part
Of a protector, the first filial tie
Was undissolved; and, in or out of sight,
Remained imperishably interwoven
With life itself. Thus, 'mid a shifting world,
Did they together testify of time
And season's difference—a double tree
With two collateral stems sprung from one root;
Such were they—such thro' life they *might* have been
In union, in partition only such;
Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High;
Yet, thro' all visitations and all trials,
Still they were faithful; like two vessels launched
From the same beach one ocean to explore
With mutual help, and sailing—to their league
True, as inexorable winds, or bars
Floating or fixed of polar ice, allow.
  But turn we rather, let my spirit turn
With thine, O silent and invisible Friend!
To those dear intervals, nor rare nor brief,
When reunited, and by choice withdrawn
From miscellaneous converse, ye were taught
That the remembrance of foregone distress,
And the worse fear of future ill (which oft
Doth hang around it, as a sickly child
Upon its mother) may be both alike
Disarmed of power to unsettle present good
So prized, and things inward and outward held
In such an even balance, that the heart
Acknowledges God's grace, his mercy feels,
And in its depth of gratitude is still.
  O gift divine of quiet sequestration!
The hermit, exercised in prayer and praise,
And feeding daily on the hope of heaven,
Is happy in his vow, and fondly cleaves
To life-long singleness; but happier far

Was to your souls, and, to the thoughts of others,
A thousand times more beautiful appeared,
Your *dual* loneliness. The sacred tie
Is broken; yet why grieve? for Time but holds
His moiety in trust, till Joy shall lead
To the blest world where parting is unknown.

1835.

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG

These verses were written extempore, immediately after reading a notice of the Ettrick Shepherd's death in the Newcastle paper, to the Editor of which I sent a copy for publication. The persons lamented in these verses were all either of my friends or acquaintance. In Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott* an account is given of my first meeting with him in 1803. How the Ettrick Shepherd and I became known to each other has already been mentioned in these notes. He was undoubtedly a man of original genius, but of coarse manners and low and offensive opinions. Of Coleridge and Lamb I need not speak here. Crabbe I have met in London at Mr. Rogers's, but more frequently and favourably at Mr. Hoare's upon Hampstead Heath. Every spring he used to pay that family a visit of some length, and was upon terms of intimate friendship with Mrs. Hoare, and still more with her daughter-in-law, who has a large collection of his letters addressed to herself. After the Poet's decease, application was made to her to give up these letters to his biographer, that they, or at least part of them, might be given to the public. She hesitated to comply, and asked my opinion on the subject. "By no means," was my answer, grounded not upon any objection there might be to publishing a selection from these letters, but from an aversion I have always felt to meet idle curiosity by calling back the recently departed to become the object of trivial and familiar gossip. Crabbe obviously for the most part preferred the company of women to that of men, for this among other reasons, that he did not like to be put upon the stretch in general conversation: accordingly in miscellaneous society his *talk* was so much below what might have been expected from a man so deservedly celebrated, that to me it seemed trifling. It must upon other occasions have been of a different character, as I found in our rambles together on Hampstead Heath, and not so much from a readiness to communicate his knowledge of life and manners as of natural history in all its branches. His mind was inquisitive, and he seems to have taken refuge from the remembrance of the distresses he had gone through, in these studies and the employments to which they led. Moreover, such contemplations might tend profitably to counterbalance the painful truths which he had collected from his intercourse with mankind. Had I been more intimate with him, I should have ventured to touch upon his office as a minister of the Gospel, and how far his heart and soul were in it so as to make him a zealous and diligent labourer: in poetry, though he wrote much, as we all know, he assuredly was not so. I happened once to speak of pains as necessary to produce merit of a certain kind which I highly valued: his observation was—"It is not worth while." You are quite right, thought I, if the labour encroaches upon the time due to teach truth as a steward of the mysteries of God: if there be cause to fear *that*, write less: but, if poetry is to be produced at all, make what you do produce as good as you can. Mr. Rogers once told me that he expressed his regret to Crabbe that he wrote in his later works so much less correctly than in his earlier. "Yes," replied he, "but then I had a reputation to make; now I can afford to relax." Whether it was from a modest estimate of his own qualifications, or from causes less creditable, his motives for writing verse and his hopes and aims were not so high as is to be desired. After being silent for more than twenty years, he again applied himself to poetry, upon the spur of applause he received from the periodical publications of the day, as he himself tells us in one of his prefaces. Is it not to be lamented that a man who was so conversant with permanent truth, and whose writings are so valuable an acquisition to our country's literature, should have *required* an impulse from such a quarter?—Mrs. Hemans was unfortunate as a poetess in being obliged by circumstances to write for money, and that so frequently and so much, that she was compelled to look out for subjects wherever she could find them, and to write as expeditiously as possible. As a woman, she was to a considerable degree a spoilt child of the world. She had been early in life distinguished for talent, and poems of hers were published while she was a girl. She had also been handsome in her youth, but her education had been most unfortunate. She was totally ignorant of housewifery, and could as easily have managed the spear of Minerva as her needle. It was from observing these deficiencies, that, one day while she was under my roof, I *purposely* directed her attention to household economy, and told her I had purchased *Scales*, which I intended to present to a young lady as a wedding present; pointed out their utility (for her especial benefit), and said that no *ménage* ought to be without them.

Mrs. Hemans, not in the least suspecting my drift, reported this saying, in a letter to a friend at the time, as a proof of my simplicity. Being disposed to make large allowances for the faults of her education and the circumstances in which she was placed, I felt most kindly disposed towards her, and took her part upon all occasions, and I was not a little affected by learning that after she withdrew to Ireland, a long and severe sickness raised her spirit as it depressed her body. This I heard from her most intimate friends, and there is striking evidence of it in a poem written and published not long before her death. These notices of Mrs. Hemans would be very unsatisfactory to her intimate friends, as indeed they are to myself, not so much for what is said, but what for brevity's sake is left unsaid. Let it suffice to add, there was much sympathy between us, and, if opportunity had been allowed me to see more of her, I should have loved and valued her accordingly; as it is, I remember her with true affection for her amiable qualities, and, above all, for her delicate and irreproachable conduct during her long separation from an unfeeling husband, whom she had been led to marry from the romantic notions of inexperienced youth. Upon this husband I never heard her cast the least reproach, nor did I ever hear her even name him, though she did not wholly forbear to touch upon her domestic position; but never so as that any fault could be found with her manner of adverting to it.

WHEN first, descending from the moorlands,
I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

When last along its banks I wandered,
Through groves that had begun to shed
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
My steps the Border-minstrel led.

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
'Mid mouldering ruins low he lies;
And death upon the braes of Yarrow,
Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes:

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
From sign to sign, its stedfast course,
Since every mortal power of Coleridge
Was frozen at its marvellous source;

The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth:
And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,
Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has brother followed brother
From sunshine to the sunless land!

Yet I, whose lids from infant slumber
Were earlier raised, remain to hear
A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
"Who next will drop and disappear?"

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
Like London with its own black wreath,
On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth-looking,
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,
Thou too art gone before; but why,
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,
Should frail survivors heave a sigh?

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;
For Her who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.

No more of old romantic sorrows,
For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid!
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet dead.[1]
Nov. 1835.

UPON SEEING A COLOURED DRAWING OF THE BIRD OF PARADISE IN AN ALBUM

I cannot forbear to record that the last seven lines of this Poem were composed in bed during the night of the day on which my sister Sara Hutchinson died about 6 P.M., and it was the thought of her innocent and beautiful life that, through faith, prompted the words—

"On wings that fear no glance of God's pure sight,
No tempest from his breath."

The reader will find two poems on pictures of this bird among my Poems. I will here observe that in a far greater number of instances than have been mentioned in these notes one poem has, as in this case, grown out of another, either because I felt the subject had been inadequately treated, or that the thoughts and images suggested in course of composition have been such as I found interfered with the unity indispensable to every work of art, however humble in character.

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[1] See Note.

WHO rashly strove thy Image to portray?
Thou buoyant minion of the tropic air;
How could he think of the live creature—gay
With a divinity of colours, drest
In all her brightness, from the dancing crest
Far as the last gleam of the filmy train
Extended and extending to sustain
The motions that it graces—and forbear
To drop his pencil! Flowers of every clime
Depicted on these pages smile at time;
And gorgeous insects copied with nice care
Are here, and likenesses of many a shell
Tossed ashore by restless waves,
Or in the diver's grasp fetched up from caves
Where sea-nymphs might be proud to dwell:
But whose rash hand (again I ask) could dare,
'Mid casual tokens and promiscuous shows,
To circumscribe this Shape in fixed repose;
Could imitate for indolent survey,
Perhaps for touch profane,
Plumes that might catch, but cannot keep, a stain;
And, with cloud-streaks lightest and loftiest, share
The sun's first greeting, his last farewell ray!
 Resplendent Wanderer! followed with glad eyes
Where'er her course; mysterious Bird!
To whom, by wondering Fancy stirred,
Eastern Islanders have given
A holy name—the Bird of Heaven!
And even a title higher still,
The Bird of God! whose blessed will
She seems performing as she flies
Over the earth and through the skies
In never-wearied search of Paradise—
Region that crowns her beauty with the name
She bears for *us*—for us how blest,
How happy at all seasons, could like aim
Uphold our Spirits urged to kindred flight
On wings that fear no glance of God's pure sight,
No tempest from his breath, their promised rest
Seeking with indefatigable quest
Above a world that deems itself most wise
When most enslaved by gross realities!

1835.

COMPOSED AFTER READING A NEWSPAPER OF THE DAY

"PEOPLE! your chains are severing link by link;
Soon shall the Rich be levelled down—the Poor
Meet them half way." Vain boast! for These, the more
They thus would rise, must low and lower sink
Till, by repentance stung, they fear to think;
While all lie prostrate, save the tyrant few
Bent in quick turns each other to undo,
And mix the poison, they themselves must drink.
Mistrust thyself, vain Country! cease to cry,
"Knowledge will save me from the threatened woe."
For, if than other rash ones more thou know,
Yet on presumptuous wing as far would fly
Above thy knowledge as they dared to go,
Thou wilt provoke a heavier penalty.

1835.

"BY A BLEST HUSBAND GUIDED, MARY CAME"

This lady was named Carleton; she, along with a sister, was brought up in the neighbourhood of Ambleside. The epitaph, a part of it at least, is in the church at Bromsgrove, where she resided after her marriage.

BY a blest Husband guided, Mary came
From nearest kindred, Vernon her new name;
She came, though meek of soul, in seemly pride
Of happiness and hope, a youthful Bride.
O dread reverse! if aught *be* so, which proves
That God will chasten whom he dearly loves.
Faith bore her up through pains in mercy given,
And troubles that were each a step to Heaven:
Two Babes were laid in earth before she died:

A third now slumbers at the Mother's side;
Its Sister-twin survives, whose smiles afford
A trembling solace to her widowed Lord.
Reader! if to thy bosom cling the pain
Of recent sorrow combated in vain;
Or if thy cherished grief have failed to thwart
Time still intent on his insidious part,
Lulling the mourner's best good thoughts asleep,
Pilfering regrets we would, but cannot, keep;
Bear with Him—judge *Him* gently who makes known
His bitter loss by this memorial Stone;
And pray that in his faithful breast the grace
Of resignation find a hallowed place.

1835.

SONNETS

I

DESPONDING Father! mark this altered bough,
So beautiful of late, with sunshine warmed,
Or moist with dews; what more unsightly now,
Its blossoms shrivelled, and its fruit, if formed,
Invisible? yet Spring her genial brow
Knits not o'er that discolouring and decay
As false to expectation. Nor fret thou
At like unlovely process in the May
Of human life: a Stripling's graces blow,
Fade and are shed, that from their timely fall
(Misdeem it not a cankerous change) may grow
Rich mellow bearings, that for thanks shall call:
In all men, sinful is it to be slow
To hope—in Parents, sinful above all.

1835.

II

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES DISCOVERED AT BISHOPSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

My attention to these antiquities was directed by Mr. Walker, son to the itinerant Eidouranian Philosopher. The beautiful pavement was discovered within a few yards of the front door of his parsonage, and appeared from the site (in full view of several hills upon which there had formerly been Roman encampments) as if it might have been the villa of the commander of the forces, at least such was Mr. Walker's conjecture.

WHILE poring Antiquarians search the ground
Upturned with curious pains, the Bard, a Seer,
Takes fire:—The men that have been reappear;
Romans for travel girt, for business gowned;
And some recline on couches, myrtle-crowned,
In festal glee: why not? For fresh and clear,
As if its hues were of the passing year,
Dawns this time-buried pavement. From that mound
Hoards may come forth of Trajans, Maximins,
Shrunk into coins with all their warlike toil:
Or a fierce impress issues with its foil
Of tenderness—the Wolf, whose suckling Twins
The unlettered ploughboy pities when he wins
The casual treasure from the furrowed soil.

1835.

III

ST. CATHERINE OF LEDBURY

Written on a journey from Brinsop Court, Herefordshire.

WHEN human touch (as monkish books attest)
Nor was applied nor could be, Ledbury bells
Broke forth in concert flung adown the dells,
And upward, high as Malvern's cloudy crest;
Sweet tones, and caught by a noble Lady blest
To rapture! Mabel listened at the side
Of her loved mistress: soon the music died,
And Catherine said, Here I set up my rest.
Warned in a dream, the Wanderer long had sought

A home that by such miracle of sound
Must be revealed:—she heard it now, or felt
The deep, deep joy of a confiding thought;
And there, a saintly Anchoress, she dwelt
Till she exchanged for heaven that happy ground.
1835.

IV

In the month of January, when Dora and I were walking from Town-end, Grasmere, across the vale, snow being on the ground, she espied, in the thick though leafless hedge, a bird's nest half filled with snow. Out of this comfortless appearance arose this Sonnet, which was, in fact, written without the least reference to any individual object, but merely to prove to myself that I could, if I thought fit, write in a strain that Poets have been fond of. On the 14th of February in the same year, my daughter, in a sportive mood, sent it as a Valentine, under a fictitious name, to her cousin C. W.

WHY art thou silent! Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?
Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant—
Bound to thy service with unceasing care,
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For nought but what thy happiness could spare.
Speak—though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine—
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know!
1835.

V

Suggested on the road between Preston and Lancaster where it first gives a view of the Lake country, and composed on the same day, on the roof of the coach.

FOUR fiery steeds impatient of the rein
Whirled us o'er sunless ground beneath a sky
As void of sunshine, when, from that wide plain,
Clear tops of far-off mountains we descry,
Like a Sierra of cerulean Spain,
All light and lustre. Did no heart reply?
Yes, there was One;—for One, asunder fly
The thousand links of that ethereal chain;
And green vales open out, with grove and field,
And the fair front of many a happy Home;
Such tempting spots as into vision come
While Soldiers, weary of the arms they wield
And sick at heart of strifeful Christendom,
Gaze on the moon by parting clouds revealed.
1835.

VI

TO ——

The fate of this poor Dove, as described, was told to me at Brinsop Court, by the young lady to whom I have given the name of Lesbia.

"Miss not the occasion: by the forelock take
That subtile Power, the never-halting Time,
Lest a mere moment's putting-off should make
Mischance almost as heavy as a crime."

"WAIT, prithee, wait!" this answer Lesbia threw
Forth to her Dove, and took no further heed;
Her eye was busy, while her fingers flew
Across the harp, with soul-engrossing speed;
But from that bondage when her thoughts were freed
She rose, and toward the close-shut casement drew,
Whence the poor unregarded Favourite, true
To old affections, had been heard to plead
With flapping wing for entrance. What a shriek!
Forced from that voice so lately tuned to a strain
Of harmony!—a shriek of terror, pain,
And self-reproach! for, from aloft, a Kite
Pounced,—and the Dove, which from its ruthless beak
She could not rescue, perished in her sight!
1835.

VII

SAID Secrecy to Cowardice and Fraud,
Falsehood and Treachery, in close council met,
Deep under ground, in Pluto's cabinet,

"The frost of England's pride will soon be thawed;
"Hooded the open brow that overawed
"Our schemes; the faith and honour, never yet
"By us with hope encountered, be upset;—
"For once I burst my bands, and cry, applaud!"
Then whispered she, "The Bill is carrying out!"
They heard, and, starting up, the Brood of Night
Clapped hands, and shook with glee their matted locks;
All Powers and Places that abhor the light
Joined in the transport, echoed back their shout,
Hurrah for ——, hugging his Ballot-box!

1835.

NOVEMBER 1836

EVEN so for me a Vision sanctified
The sway of Death; long ere mine eyes had seen
Thy countenance—the still rapture of thy mien—
When thou, dear Sister! wert become Death's Bride:
No trace of pain or languor could abide
That change:—age on thy brow was smoothed—thy cold
Wan cheek at once was privileged to unfold
A loveliness to living youth denied.
Oh! if within me hope should e'er decline,
The lamp of faith, lost Friend! too faintly burn;
Then may that heaven-revealing smile of thine,
The bright assurance, visibly return:
And let my spirit in that power divine
Rejoice, as, through that power, it ceased to mourn.

"SIX MONTHS TO SIX YEARS ADDED HE REMAINED"

SIX months to six years added he remained
Upon this sinful earth, by sin unstained:
O blessed Lord! whose mercy then removed
A Child whom every eye that looked on loved;
Support us, teach us calmly to resign
What we possessed, and now is wholly thine!

1836.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY

1837

During my whole life I had felt a strong desire to visit Rome and the other celebrated cities and regions of Italy, but did not think myself justified in incurring the necessary expense till I received from Mr. Moxon, the publisher of a large edition of my poems, a sum sufficient to enable me to gratify my wish without encroaching upon what I considered due to my family. My excellent friend H. C. Robinson readily consented to accompany me, and in March 1837, we set off from London, to which we returned in August, earlier than my companion wished or I should myself have desired had I been, like him, a bachelor. These Memorials of that tour touch upon but a very few of the places and objects that interested me, and, in what they do advert to, are for the most part much slighter than I could wish. More particularly do I regret that there is no notice in them of the South of France, nor of the Roman antiquities abounding in that district, especially of the Pont de Degard, which, together with its situation, impressed me full as much as any remains of Roman architecture to be found in Italy. Then there was Vaucluse, with its Fountain, its Petrarch, its rocks of all seasons, its small plots of lawn in their first vernal freshness, and the blossoms of the peach and other trees embellishing the scene on every side. The beauty of the stream also called forcibly for the expression of sympathy from one who from his childhood had studied the brooks and torrents of his native mountains. Between two and three hours did I run about climbing the steep and rugged crags from whose base the water of Vaucluse breaks forth. "Has Laura's Lover," often said I to myself, "ever sat down upon this stone? or has his foot ever pressed that turf?" Some, especially of the female sex, would have felt sure of it: my answer was (impute it to my years), "I fear not." Is it not in fact obvious that many of his love verses must have flowed I do not say from a wish to display his own talent, but from a habit of exercising his intellect in that way rather than from an impulse of his heart? It is otherwise with his Lyrical poems, and particularly with the one upon the degradation of his country: there he pours out his reproaches, lamentations, and aspirations like an ardent and sincere patriot. But enough: it is time to turn to my own effusions, such as they are.

TO
HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

Companion! by whose buoyant Spirit cheered,
In whose experience trusting, day by day
Treasures I gained with zeal that neither feared
The toils nor felt the crosses of the way,
These records take, and happy should I be
Were but the Gift a meet Return to thee
For kindnesses that never ceased to flow,
And prompt self-sacrifice to which I owe
Far more than any heart but mine can know.
W. Wordsworth.

Rydal Mount, *Feb. 14th*, 1842.

The Tour of which the following Poems are very inadequate remembrances was shortened by report, too well founded, of the prevalence of Cholera at Naples. To make some amends for what was reluctantly left unseen in the South of Italy, we visited the Tuscan Sanctuaries among the Apennines, and the principal Italian Lakes among the Alps. Neither of those lakes, nor of Venice, is there any notice in these Poems, chiefly because I have touched upon them elsewhere. See, in particular, "Descriptive Sketches," "Memorials of a Tour on the Continent in 1820," and a Sonnet upon the extinction of the Venetian Republic.

I

MUSINGS NEAR AQUAPENDENTE

April 1837

"Not the less
Had his sunk eye kindled at those dear words
That spake of bards and minstrels."

His, Sir Walter Scott's eye, *did* in fact kindle at them, for the lines, "Places forsaken now," and the two that follow were adopted from a poem of mine which nearly forty years ago was in part read to him, and he never forgot them.

"Old Helvellyn's brow,
Where once together, in his day of strength,
We stood rejoicing."

Sir Humphrey Davy was with us at the time. We had ascended from Paterdale, and I could not but admire the vigour with which Scott scrambled along that horn of the mountain called "Striding Edge." Our progress was necessarily slow, and was beguiled by Scott's telling many stories and amusing anecdotes, as was his custom. Sir H. Davy would have probably been better pleased if other topics had occasionally been interspersed, and some discussion entered upon: at all events he did not remain with us long at the top of the mountain, but left us to find our way down its steep side together into the vale of Grasmere, where, at my cottage, Mrs. Scott was to meet us at dinner.

"With faint smile
He said, —'When I am there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow.'"

See among these notes the one on "Yarrow Revisited."

"A few short steps (painful they were)."

This, though introduced here, I did not know till it was told me at Rome by Miss Mackenzie of Seaforth, a lady whose friendly attentions during my residence at Rome I have gratefully acknowledged, with expressions of sincere regret that she is no more. Miss M. told me that she accompanied Sir Walter to the Janicular Mount, and, after showing him the grave of Tasso in the church upon the top, and a mural monument there erected to his memory, they left the church and stood together on the brow of the hill overlooking the city of Rome: his daughter Anne was with them, and she, naturally desirous, for the sake of Miss Mackenzie especially, to have some expression of pleasure from her father, half reproached him for showing nothing of that kind either by his looks or voice: "How can I," replied he, "having only one leg to stand upon, and that in extreme pain!" so that the prophecy was more than fulfilled.

"Over waves rough and deep."

We took boat near the lighthouse at the point of the right horn of the bay which makes a sort of natural port for Genoa; but the wind was high, and the waves long and rough, so that I did not feel quite recompensed by the view of the city, splendid as it was, for the danger apparently incurred. The boatman (I had only one) encouraged me, saying we were quite safe, but I was not a little glad when we gained the shore, though Shelley and Byron—one of them at least, who seemed to have courted agitation from any quarter—would have probably rejoiced in such a situation: more than once I believe were they both in extreme danger even on the Lake of Geneva. Every man however has his fears of some kind or other; and no doubt they had theirs: of all men whom I have ever known, Coleridge had the most of passive courage in bodily peril, but no one was so easily cowed when moral firmness was required in miscellaneous conversation or in the daily intercourse of social life.

"How lovely robed in forenoon light and shade,
Each ministering to each, didst thou appear,
Savona."

There is not a single bay along this beautiful coast that might not raise in a traveller a wish to take up his abode there, each as it succeeds seems more inviting than the other; but the desolated convent on the cliff in the bay of Savona struck my fancy most; and had I, for the sake of my own health or that of a dear friend, or any other cause, been desirous of a residence abroad, I should have let my thoughts loose upon a scheme of turning some part of this building into a habitation provided as far as might be with English comforts. There is close by it a row or avenue, I forget which, of tall cypresses. I could not forbear saying to myself—"What a sweet family walk, or one for lonely musings, would be found under the shade!" but there, probably, the trees remained little noticed and seldom enjoyed.

"This flowering broom's dear neighbourhood."

The broom is a great ornament through the months of March and April to the vales and hills of the Apennines, in the wild parts of which it blows in the utmost profusion, and of course successively at different elevations as the season advances. It surpasses ours in beauty and fragrance, but, speaking from my own limited observation only, I cannot affirm the same of several of their wild spring flowers, the primroses in particular, which I saw not unfrequently but thinly scattered and languishing compared to ours.

The note at the close of this poem, upon the Oxford movement, was intrusted to my friend Mr. Frederick Faber. I told him what I wished to be said, and begged that, as he was intimately acquainted with several of the Leaders of it, he would express my thought in the way least likely to be taken amiss by them. Much of the work they are undertaking was grievously wanted, and God grant their endeavours may continue to prosper as they have done.

YE Apennines! with all your fertile vales
Deeply embosomed, and your winding shores
Of either sea—an Islander by birth,
A Mountaineer by habit, would resound
Your praise, in meet accordance with your claims
Bestowed by Nature, or from man's great deeds
Inherited:—presumptuous thought!—it fled
Like vapour, like a towering cloud, dissolved.
Not, therefore, shall my mind give way to sadness;—
Yon snow-white torrent-fall, plumb down it drops
Yet ever hangs or seems to hang in air,
Lulling the leisure of that high perched town,
AQUAPENDENTE, in her lofty site
Its neighbour and its namesake—town, and flood
Forth flashing out of its own gloomy chasm
Bright sunbeams—the fresh verdure of this lawn
Strewn with grey rocks, and on the horizon's verge,
O'er intervenient waste, through glimmering haze,
Unquestionably kenned, that cone-shaped hill
With fractured summit, no indifferent sight
To travellers, from such comforts as are thine,
Bleak Radicofani! escaped with joy—
These are before me; and the varied scene
May well suffice, till noon-tide's sultry heat
Relax, to fix and satisfy the mind
Passive yet pleased. What! with this Broom in flower
Close at my side! She bids me fly to greet
Her sisters, soon like her to be attired
With golden blossoms opening at the feet
Of my own Fairfield. The glad greeting given,
Given with a voice and by a look returned
Of old companionship, Time counts not minutes
Ere, from accustomed paths, familiar fields,
The local Genius hurries me aloft,
Transported over that cloud-wooing hill,
Seat Sandal, a fond suitor of the clouds,
With dream-like smoothness, to Helvellyn's top,
There to alight upon crisp moss and range,
Obtaining ampler boon, at every step,
Of visual sovereignty—hills multitudinous,
(Not Apennine can boast of fairer) hills
Pride of two nations, wood and lake and plains,
And prospect right below of deep coves shaped
By skeleton arms, that, from the mountain's trunk
Extended, clasp the winds, with mutual moan
Struggling for liberty, while undismayed

The shepherd struggles with them. Onward thence
And downward by the skirt of Greenside fell,
And by Glenridding-screes, and low Glencoign,
Places forsaken now, though loving still
The muses, as they loved them in the days
Of the old minstrels and the border bards.—
But here am I fast bound; and let it pass,
The simple rapture;—who that travels far
To feed his mind with watchful eyes could share
Or wish to share it?—One there surely was,
"The Wizard of the North," with anxious hope
Brought to this genial climate, when disease
Preyed upon body and mind—yet not the less
Had his sunk eye kindled at those dear words
That spake of bards and minstrels; and his spirit
Had flown with mine to old Helvellyn's brow,
Where once together, in his day of strength,
We stood rejoicing, as if earth were free
From sorrow, like the sky above our heads.
  Years followed years, and when, upon the eve
Of his last going from Tweed-side, thought turned,
Or by another's sympathy was led,
To this bright land, Hope was for him no friend,
Knowledge no help; Imagination shaped
No promise. Still, in more than ear-deep seats,
Survives for me, and cannot but survive
The tone of voice which wedded borrowed words
To sadness not their own, when, with faint smile
Forced by intent to take from speech its edge,
He said, "When I am there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow."[1] Prophecy
More than fulfilled, as gay Campania's shores
Soon witnessed, and the city of seven hills,
Her sparkling fountains, and her mouldering tombs;
And more than all, that Eminence which showed
Her splendours, seen, not felt, the while he stood
A few short steps (painful they were) apart
From Tasso's Convent-haven, and retired grave.
  Peace to their Spirits! why should Poesy
Yield to the lure of vain regret, and hover
In gloom on wings with confidence outspread
To move in sunshine?—Utter thanks, my Soul!
Tempered with awe, and sweetened by compassion
For them who in the shades of sorrow dwell,
That I—so near the term to human life
Appointed by man's common heritage,
Frail as the frailest, one withal (if that
Deserve a thought) but little known to fame—
Am free to rove where Nature's loveliest looks,
Art's noblest relics, history's rich bequests,
Failed to reanimate and but feebly cheered
The whole world's Darling—free to rove at will
O'er high and low, and if requiring rest,
Rest from enjoyment only.
                    Thanks poured forth
For what thus far hath blessed my wanderings, thanks
Fervent but humble as the lips can breathe
Where gladness seems a duty—let me guard
Those seeds of expectation which the fruit
Already gathered in this favoured Land
Enfolds within its core. The faith be mine,
That He who guides and governs all, approves
When gratitude, though disciplined to look
Beyond these transient spheres, doth wear a crown
Of earthly hope put on with trembling hand;
Nor is least pleased, we trust, when golden beams,
Reflected through the mists of age, from hours
Of innocent delight, remote or recent,
Shoot but a little way—'tis all they can—
Into the doubtful future. Who would keep

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[1] See Note.

Power must resolve to cleave to it through life,
Else it deserts him, surely as he lives.
Saints would not grieve nor guardian angels frown
If one—while tossed, as was my lot to be,
In a frail bark urged by two slender oars
Over waves rough and deep, that, when they broke,
Dashed their white foam against the palace walls
Of Genoa the superb—should there be led
To meditate upon his own appointed tasks,
However humble in themselves, with thoughts
Raised and sustained by memory of Him
Who oftentimes within those narrow bounds
Rocked on the surge, there tried his spirit's strength
And grasp of purpose, long ere sailed his ship
To lay a new world open.
Nor less prized
Be those impressions which incline the heart
To mild, to lowly, and to seeming weak,
Bend that way her desires. The dew, the storm—
The dew whose moisture fell in gentle drops
On the small hyssop destined to become,
By Hebrew ordinance devoutly kept,
A purifying instrument—the storm
That shook on Lebanon the cedar's top,
And as it shook, enabling the blind roots
Further to force their way, endowed its trunk
With magnitude and strength fit to uphold
The glorious temple—did alike proceed
From the same gracious will, were both an offspring
Of bounty infinite.
Between Powers that aim
Higher to lift their lofty heads, impelled
By no profane ambition, Powers that thrive
By conflict, and their opposites, that trust
In lowliness—a midway tract there lies
Of thoughtful sentiment for every mind
Pregnant with good. Young, Middle-aged, and Old,
From century on to century, must have known
The emotion—nay, more fitly were it said—
The blest tranquillity that sunk so deep
Into my spirit, when I paced, enclosed
In Pisa's Campo Santo, the smooth floor
Of its Arcades paved with sepulchral slabs,
And through each window's open fretwork looked
O'er the blank Area of sacred earth
Fetched from Mount Calvary, or haply delved
In precincts nearer to the Saviour's tomb,
By hands of men, humble as brave, who fought
For its deliverance—a capacious field
That to descendants of the dead it holds
And to all living mute memento breathes,
More touching far than ought which on the walls
Is pictured, or their epitaphs can speak,
Of the changed City's long-departed power,
Glory, and wealth, which, perilous as they are,
Here did not kill, but nourished, Piety.
And, high above that length of cloistral roof,
Peering in air and backed by azure sky,
To kindred contemplations ministers
The Baptistery's dome, and that which swells
From the Cathedral pile; and with the twain
Conjoined in prospect mutable or fixed
(As hurry on in eagerness the feet,
Or pause) the summit of the Leaning-tower.
Nor less remuneration waits on him
Who having left the Cemetery stands
In the Tower's shadow, of decline and fall
Admonished not without some sense of fear,
Fear that soon vanishes before the sight
Of splendour unextinguished, pomp unscathed,
And beauty unimpaired. Grand in itself,
And for itself, the assemblage, grand and fair
To view, and for the mind's consenting eye
A type of age in man, upon its front
Bearing the world-acknowledged evidence
Of past exploits, nor fondly after more
Struggling against the stream of destiny,
But with its peaceful majesty content.
—Oh what a spectacle at every turn
The Place unfolds, from pavement skinned with moss

Or grass-grown spaces, where the heaviest foot
Provokes no echoes, but must softly tread;
Where Solitude with Silence paired stops short
Of Desolation, and to Ruin's scythe
Decay submits not.
But where'er my steps
Shall wander, chiefly let me cull with care
Those images of genial beauty, oft
Too lovely to be pensive in themselves
But by reflection made so, which do best
And fitliest serve to crown with fragrant wreaths
Life's cup when almost filled with years, like mine
—How lovely robed in forenoon light and shade,
Each ministering to each, didst thou appear
Savona, Queen of territory fair
As aught that marvellous coast thro' all its length
Yields to the Stranger's eye. Remembrance holds
As a selected treasure thy one cliff,
That, while it wore for melancholy crest
A shattered Convent, yet rose proud to have
Clinging to its steep sides a thousand herbs
And shrubs, whose pleasant looks gave proof how kind
The breath of air can be where earth had else
Seemed churlish. And behold, both far and near,
Garden and field all decked with orange bloom,
And peach and citron, in Spring's mildest breeze
Expanding; and, along the smooth shore curved
Into a natural port, a tideless sea,
To that mild breeze with motion and with voice
Softly responsive; and, attuned to all
Those vernal charms of sight and sound, appeared
Smooth space of turf which from the guardian fort
Sloped seaward, turf whose tender April green,
In coolest climes too fugitive, might even here
Plead with the sovereign Sun for longer stay
Than his unmitigated beams allow,
Nor plead in vain, if beauty could preserve,
From mortal change, aught that is born on earth
Or doth on time depend.
While on the brink
Of that high Convent-crested cliff I stood,
Modest Savona! over all did brood
A pure poetic Spirit—as the breeze,
Mild—as the verdure, fresh—the sunshine, bright—
Thy gentle Chiabrera!—not a stone,
Mural or level with the trodden floor,
In Church or Chapel, if my curious quest
Missed not the truth, retains a single name
Of young or old, warrior, or saint, or sage,
To whose dear memories his sepulchral verse[1]
Paid simple tribute, such as might have flowed
From the clear spring of a plain English heart,
Say rather, one in native fellowship
With all who want not skill to couple grief
With praise, as genuine admiration prompts.
The grief, the praise, are severed from their dust,
Yet in his page the records of that worth
Survive, uninjured;—glory then to words,
Honour to word-preserving Arts, and hail
Ye kindred local influences that still,
If Hope's familiar whispers merit faith,
Await my steps when they the breezy height
Shall range of philosophic Tusculum;
Or Sabine vales explored inspire a wish
To meet the shade of Horace by the side
Of his Bandusian fount; or I invoke
His presence to point out the spot where once
He sate, and eulogized with earnest pen
Peace, leisure, freedom, moderate desires;
And all the immunities of rural life
Extolled, behind Vacuna's crumbling fane.
Or let me loiter, soothed with what is given
Nor asking more, on that delicious Bay,
Parthenope's Domain—Virgilian haunt,
Illustrated with never-dying verse,
And, by the Poet's laurel-shaded tomb,
Age after age to Pilgrims from all lands
Endeared.
And who—if not a man as cold
In heart as dull in brain—while pacing ground
Chosen by Rome's legendary Bards, high minds

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[1] See Note.

Out of her early struggles well inspired
To localize heroic acts—could look
Upon the spots with undelighted eye,
Though even to their last syllable the Lays
And very names of those who gave them birth
Have perished?—Verily, to her utmost depth,
Imagination feels what Reason fears not
To recognize, the lasting virtue lodged
In those bold fictions that, by deeds assigned
To the Valerian, Fabian, Curian Race,
And others like in fame, created Powers
With attributes from History derived,
By Poesy irradiate, and yet graced,
Through marvellous felicity of skill,
With something more propitious to high aims
Than either, pent within her separate sphere,
Can oft with justice claim.
                              And not disdaining
Union with those primeval energies
To virtue consecrate, stoop ye from your height
Christian Traditions! at my Spirit's call
Descend, and, on the brow of ancient Rome
As she survives in ruin, manifest
Your glories mingled with the brightest hues
Of her memorial halo, fading, fading,
But never to be extinct while Earth endures.
O come, if undishonoured by the prayer,
From all her Sanctuaries!—Open for my feet
Ye Catacombs, give to mine eyes a glimpse
Of the Devout, as, 'mid your glooms convened
For safety, they of yore enclasped the Cross
On knees that ceased from trembling, or intoned
Their orisons with voices half-suppressed,
But sometimes heard, or fancied to be heard,
Even at this hour.
                              And thou Mamertine prison,
Into that vault receive me from whose depth
Issues, revealed in no presumptuous vision,
Albeit lifting human to divine,
A Saint, the Church's Rock, the mystic Keys
Grasped in his hand; and lo! with upright sword
Prefiguring his own impendent doom,
The Apostle of the Gentiles; both prepared
To suffer pains with heathen scorn and hate
Inflicted;—blessèd Men, for so to Heaven
They follow their dear Lord!
                              Time flows—nor winds,
Nor stagnates, nor precipitates his course,
But many a benefit borne upon his breast
For human-kind sinks out of sight, is gone,
No one knows how; nor seldom is put forth
An angry arm that snatches good away,
Never perhaps to reappear. The Stream
Has to our generation brought and brings
Innumerable gains; yet we, who now
Walk in the light of day, pertain full surely
To a chilled age, most pitiably shut out
From that which *is* and actuates, by forms,
Abstractions, and by lifeless fact to fact
Minutely linked with diligence uninspired,
Unrectified, unguided, unsustained,
By godlike insight. To this fate is doomed
Science, wide-spread and spreading still as be
Her conquests, in the world of sense made known,
So with the internal mind it fares; and so
With morals, trusting, in contempt or fear
Of vital principle's controlling law,
To her purblind guide Expediency; and so
Suffers religious faith. Elate with view
Of what is won, we overlook or scorn
The best that should keep pace with it, and must,
Else more and more the general mind will droop,
Even as if bent on perishing. There lives
No faculty within us which the Soul
Can spare, and humblest earthly Weal demands,
For dignity not placed beyond her reach,
Zealous co-operation of all means
Given or acquired, to raise us from the mire,
And liberate our hearts from low pursuits.
By gross Utilities enslaved, we need
More of ennobling impulse from the past,
If to the future aught of good must come
Sounder and therefore holier than the ends
Which, in the giddiness of self-applause,
We covet as supreme. O grant the crown
That Wisdom wears, or take his treacherous staff
From Knowledge!—If the Muse, whom I have served

This day, be mistress of a single pearl
Fit to be placed in that pure diadem;
Then, not in vain, under these chestnut boughs
Reclined, shall I have yielded up my soul
To transports from the secondary founts
Flowing of time and place, and paid to both
Due homage; nor shall fruitlessly have striven,
By love of beauty moved, to enshrine in verse
Accordant meditations, which in times
Vexed and disordered, as our own, may shed
Influence, at least among a scattered few,
To soberness of mind and peace of heart
Friendly; as here to my repose hath been
This flowering broom's dear neighbourhood, the light
And murmur issuing from yon pendent flood,
And all the varied landscape. Let us now
Rise, and to-morrow greet magnificent Rome.[1]

II

THE PINE OF MONTE MARIO AT ROME

Sir George Beaumont told me that, when he first visited Italy, pine-trees of this species abounded, but that on his return thither, which was more than thirty years after, they had disappeared from many places where he had been accustomed to admire them, and had become rare all over the country, especially in and about Rome. Several Roman villas have within these few years passed into the hands of foreigners, who, I observed with pleasure, have taken care to plant this tree, which in course of years will become a great ornament to the city and to the general landscape. May I venture to add here, that having ascended the Monte Mario, I could not resist embracing the trunk of this interesting monument of my departed friend's feelings for the beauties of nature, and the power of that art which he loved so much, and in the practice of which he was so distinguished.

I SAW far off the dark top of a Pine
Look like a cloud—a slender stem the tie
That bound it to its native earth—poised high
'Mid evening hues, along the horizon line,
Striving in peace each other to outshine.
But when I learned the Tree was living there,
Saved from the sordid axe by Beaumont's care,
Oh, what a gush of tenderness was mine!
The rescued Pine-Tree, with its sky so bright
And cloud-like beauty, rich in thoughts of home,
Death-parted friends, and days too swift in flight,
Supplanted the whole majesty of Rome
(Then first apparent from the Pincian Height)
Crowned with St. Peter's everlasting Dome.[2]

III

AT ROME

Sight is at first a sad enemy to imagination and to those pleasures belonging to old times with which some exertions of that power will always mingle: nothing perhaps brings this truth home to the feelings more than the city of Rome; not so much in respect to the impression made at the moment when it is first seen and looked at as a whole, for then the imagination may be invigorated and the mind eye's quickened; but when particular spots or objects are sought out, disappointment is I believe invariably felt. Ability to recover from this disappointment will exist in proportion to knowledge, and the power of the mind to reconstruct out of fragments and parts, and to make details in the present subservient to more adequate comprehension of the past.

Is this, ye Gods, the Capitolian Hill?
Yon petty Steep in truth the fearful Rock,
Tarpeian named of yore, and keeping still
That name, a local Phantom proud to mock
The Traveller's expectation?—Could our Will
Destroy the ideal Power within, 'twere done
Thro' what men see and touch,—slaves wandering on,
Impelled by thirst of all but Heaven-taught skill.
Full oft, our wish obtained, deeply we sigh;
Yet not unrecompensed are they who learn,
From that depression raised, to mount on high
With stronger wing, more clearly to discern
Eternal things; and, if need be, defy
Change, with a brow not insolent, though stern.

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[1] See Note.

[2] See Note.

IV

AT ROME—REGRETS—IN ALLUSION TO NIEBUHR AND OTHER MODERN HISTORIANS

Those old credulities, to nature dear,
Shall they no longer bloom upon the stock
Of History, stript naked as a rock
'Mid a dry desert? What is it we hear?
The glory of Infant Rome must disappear,
Her morning splendours vanish, and their place
Know them no more. If Truth, who veiled her face
With those bright beams yet hid it not, must steer
Henceforth a humbler course perplexed and slow;
One solace yet remains for us who came
Into this world in days when story lacked
Severe research, that in our hearts we know
How, for exciting youth's heroic flame,
Assent is power, belief the soul of fact.

V

CONTINUED

Complacent Fictions were they, yet the same
Involved a history of no doubtful sense,
History that proves by inward evidence
From what a precious source of truth it came.
Ne'er could the boldest Eulogist have dared
Such deeds to paint, such characters to frame,
But for coeval sympathy prepared
To greet with instant faith their loftiest claim.
None but a noble people could have loved
Flattery in Ancient Rome's pure-minded style:
Not in like sort the Runic Scald was moved;
He, nursed 'mid savage passions that defile
Humanity, sang feats that well might call
For for blood-thirsty mead of Odin's riotous Hall.

VI

PLEA FOR THE HISTORIAN

Forbear to deem the Chronicler unwise,
Ungentle, or untouched by seemly ruth,
Who, gathering up all that Time's envious tooth
Has spared of sound and grave realities,
Firmly rejects those dazzling flatteries,
Dear as they are to unsuspecting Youth,
That might have drawn down Clio from the skies
To vindicate the majesty of truth.
Such was her office while she walked with men,
A Muse, who, not unmindful of her Sire
All-ruling Jove, whate'er the theme might be
Revered her Mother, sage Mnemosyne,
And taught her faithful servants how the lyre
Should animate, but not mislead, the pen.[1]

VII

AT ROME

I have a private interest in this Sonnet, for I doubt whether it would ever have been written but for the lively picture given me by Anna Ricketts of what they had witnessed of the indignation and sorrow expressed by some Italian noblemen of their acquaintance upon the surrender, which circumstances had obliged them to make, of the best portion of their family mansions to strangers.

They—who have seen the noble Roman's scorn
Break forth at thought of laying down his head,
When the blank day is over, garreted
In his ancestral palace, where, from morn
To night, the desecrated floors are worn
By feet of purse-proud strangers; they—who have read
In one meek smile, beneath a peasant's shed,
How patiently the weight of wrong is borne;
They—who have heard some learned Patriot treat

---

[1] Quem virum——lyra——
——sumes celebrare Clio?

Of freedom, with mind grasping the whole theme
From ancient Rome, downwards through that bright dream
Of Commonwealths, each city a starlike seat
Of rival glory; they—fallen Italy—
Nor must, nor will, nor can, despair of Thee!

VIII

NEAR ROME, IN SIGHT OF ST. PETER'S

Long has the dew been dried on tree and lawn:
O'er man and beast a not unwelcome boon
Is shed, the languor of approaching noon;
To shady rest withdrawing or withdrawn
Mute are all creatures, as this couchant fawn,
Save insect-swarms that hum in air afloat,
Save that the Cock is crowing, a shrill note,
Startling and shrill as that which roused the dawn.
—Heard in that hour, or when, as now, the nerve
Shrinks from the note as from a mistimed thing,
Oft for a holy warning may it serve,
Charged with remembrance of *his* sudden sting,
His bitter tears, whose name the Papal Chair
And yon resplendent Church are proud to bear.

IX

AT ALBANO

This Sonnet is founded on simple fact, and was written to enlarge, if possible, the views of those who can see nothing but evil in the intercessions countenanced by the Church of Rome. That they are in many respects lamentably pernicious must be acknowledged; but, on the other hand, they who reflect, while they see and observe, cannot but be struck with instances which will prove that it is a great error to condemn in all cases such mediation as purely idolatrous. This remark bears with especial force upon addresses to the Virgin.

Days passed—and Monte Calvo would not clear
His head from mist; and, as the wind sobbed through
Albano's dripping Ilex avenue,
My dull forebodings in a Peasant's ear
Found casual vent. She said, "Be of good cheer;
Our yesterday's procession did not sue
In vain; the sky will change to sunny blue,
Thanks to our Lady's grace." I smiled to hear,
But not in scorn:—the Matron's Faith may lack
The heavenly sanction needed to ensure
Fulfilment; but, we trust, her upward track
Stops not at this low point, nor wants the lure
Of flowers the Virgin without fear may own,
For by her Son's blest hand the seed was sown.

X

Near Anio's stream, I spied a gentle Dove
Perched on an olive branch, and heard her cooing
'Mid new-born blossoms that soft airs were wooing,
While all things present told of joy and love.
But restless Fancy left that olive grove
To hail the exploratory Bird renewing
Hope for the few, who, at the world's undoing,
On the great flood were spared to live and move.
O bounteous Heaven! signs true as dove and bough
Brought to the ark are coming evermore,
Given though we seek them not, but, while we plough
This sea of life without a visible shore,
Do neither promise ask nor grace implore
In what alone is ours, the living Now.

XI

FROM THE ALBAN HILLS, LOOKING TOWARDS ROME

Forgive, illustrious Country! these deep sighs,
Heaved less for thy bright plains and hills bestrown

With monuments decayed or overthrown,
For all that tottering stands or prostrate lies,
Than for like scenes in moral vision shown,
Ruin perceived for keener sympathies;
Faith crushed, yet proud of weeds, her gaudy crown;
Virtues laid low, and mouldering energies.
Yet why prolong this mournful strain?—Fallen Power,
Thy fortunes, twice exalted, might provoke
Verse to glad notes prophetic of the hour
When thou, uprisen, shalt break thy double yoke,
And enter, with prompt aid from the Most High,
On the third stage of thy great destiny.

XII

NEAR THE LAKE OF THRASYMENE

When here with Carthage Rome to conflict came,
An earthquake, mingling with the battle's shock,
Checked not its rage; unfelt the ground did rock,
Sword dropped not, javelin kept its deadly aim.—
Now all is sun-bright peace. Of that day's shame,
Or glory, not a vestige seems to endure,
Save in this Rill that took from blood the name[1]
Which yet it bears, sweet Stream! as crystal pure.
So may all trace and sign of deeds aloof
From the true guidance of humanity,
Thro' Time and Nature's influence, purify
Their spirit; or, unless they for reproof
Or warning serve, thus let them all, on ground
That gave them being, vanish to a sound.

XIII

NEAR THE SAME LAKE

For action born, existing to be tried,
Powers manifold we have that intervene
To stir the heart that would too closely screen
Her peace from images to pain allied.
What wonder if at midnight, by the side
Of Sanguinetto, or broad Thrasymene,
The clang of arms is heard, and phantoms glide,
Unhappy ghosts in troops by moonlight seen;
And singly thine, O vanquished Chief! whose corse,
Unburied, lay hid under heaps of slain:
But who is He?—the Conqueror. Would he force
His way to Rome? Ah, no,—round hill and plain
Wandering, he haunts, at fancy's strong command,
This spot—his shadowy death-cup in his hand.

XIV

THE CUCKOO AT LAVERNA

MAY 25, 1837

Among a thousand delightful feelings connected in my mind with the voice of the cuckoo, there is a personal one which is rather melancholy. I was first convinced that age had rather dulled my hearing, by not being able to catch the sound at the same distance as the younger companions of my walks; and of this failure I had a proof upon the occasion that suggested these verses. I did not hear the sound till Mr. Robinson had twice or thrice directed my attention to it.

List—'twas the Cuckoo.—O with what delight
Heard I that voice! and catch it now, though faint,
Far off and faint, and melting into air,
Yet not to be mistaken. Hark again!
Those louder cries give notice that the Bird,
Although invisible as Echo's self,
Is wheeling hitherward. Thanks, happy Creature,
For this unthought-of greeting!
While allured
From vale to hill, from hill to vale led on,
We have pursued, through various lands, a long
And pleasant course; flower after flower has blown,

---

[1] Sanguinetto.

Embellishing the ground that gave them birth
With aspects novel to my sight; but still
Most fair, most welcome, when they drank the dew
In a sweet fellowship with kinds beloved,
For old remembrance sake. And oft—where Spring
Displayed her richest blossoms among files
Of orange-trees bedecked with glowing fruit
Ripe for the hand, or under a thick shade
Of Ilex, or, if better suited to the hour,
The lightsome Olive's twinkling canopy—
Oft have I heard the Nightingale and Thrush
Blending as in a common English grove
Their love-songs; but, where'er my feet might roam,
Whate'er assemblages of new and old,
Strange and familiar, might beguile the way,
A gratulation from that vagrant Voice
Was wanting,—and most happily till now.
For see, Laverna! mark the far-famed Pile,
High on the brink of that precipitous rock,
Implanted like a Fortress, as in truth
It is, a Christian Fortress, garrisoned
In faith and hope, and dutiful obedience,
By a few Monks, a stern society,
Dead to the world and scorning earth-born joys.
Nay—though the hopes that drew, the fears that drove,
St. Francis, far from Man's resort, to abide
Among these sterile heights of Apennine,
Bound him, nor, since he raised yon House, have ceased
To bind his spiritual Progeny, with rules
Stringent as flesh can tolerate and live;
His milder Genius (thanks to the good God
That made us) over those severe restraints
Of mind, that dread heart-freezing discipline,
Doth sometimes here predominate, and works
By unsought means for gracious purposes;
For earth through heaven, for heaven, by changeful earth,
Illustrated, and mutually endeared.
Rapt though He were above the power of sense,
Familiarly, yet out of the cleansed heart
Of that once sinful Being overflowed
On sun, moon, stars, the nether elements,
And every shape of creature they sustain,
Divine affections; and with beast and bird
(Stilled from afar—such marvel story tells—
By casual outbreak of his passionate words,
And from their own pursuits in field or grove
Drawn to his side by look or act of love
Humane, and virtue of his innocent life)
He wont to hold companionship so free,
So pure, so fraught with knowledge and delight,
As to be likened in his Followers' minds
To that which our first Parents, ere the fall
From their high state darkened the Earth with fear,
Held with all kinds in Eden's blissful bowers.
Then question not that, 'mid the austere Band,
Who breathe the air he breathed, tread where he trod,
Some true Partakers of his loving spirit
Do still survive, and, with those gentle hearts
Consorted, Others, in the power, the faith,
Of a baptized imagination, prompt
To catch from Nature's humblest monitors
Whate'er they bring of impulses sublime.
Thus sensitive must be the Monk, though pale
With fasts, with vigils worn, depressed by years,
Whom in a sunny glade I chanced to see,
Upon a pine-tree's storm-uprooted trunk,
Seated alone, with forehead sky-ward raised,
Hands clasped above the crucifix he wore
Appended to his bosom, and lips closed
By the joint pressure of his musing mood
And habit of his vow. That ancient Man—
Nor haply less the Brother whom I marked,
As we approached the Convent gate, aloft
Looking far forth from his aerial cell,
A young Ascetic—Poet, Hero, Sage,
He might have been, Lover belike he was—
If they received into a conscious ear
The notes whose first faint greeting startled me,
Whose sedulous iteration thrilled with joy
My heart—may have been moved like me to think,
Ah! not like me who walk in the world's ways,

On the great Prophet, styled *the Voice of One*
Crying amid the wilderness, and given,
Now that their snows must melt, their herbs and flowers
Revive, their obstinate winter pass away,
That awful name to Thee, thee, simple Cuckoo,
Wandering in solitude, and evermore
Foretelling and proclaiming, ere thou leave
This thy last haunt beneath Italian skies
To carry thy glad tidings over heights
Still loftier, and to climes more near the Pole.
  Voice of the Desert, fare-thee-well; sweet Bird!
If that substantial title please thee more,
Farewell!—but go thy way, no need hast thou
Of a good wish sent after thee; from bower
To bower as green, from sky to sky as clear,
Thee gentle breezes waft—or airs, that meet
Thy course and sport around thee, softly fan—
Till Night, descending upon hill and vale,
Grants to thy mission a brief term of silence,
And folds thy pinions up in blest repose.

XV

AT THE CONVENT OF CAMALDOLI

Grieve for the Man who hither came bereft,
And seeking consolation from above;
Nor grieve the less that skill to him was left
To paint this picture of his lady-love:
Can she, a blessed saint, the work approve?
And oh, good Brethren of the cowl, a thing
So fair, to which with peril he must cling,
Destroy in pity, or with care remove.
That bloom—those eyes—can they assist to bind
Thoughts that would stray from Heaven? The dream must cease
To be; by Faith, not sight, his soul must live;
Else will the enamoured Monk too surely find
How wide a space can part from inward peace
The most profound repose his cell can give.

XVI

CONTINUED

The world forsaken, all its busy cares
And stirring interests shunned with desperate flight,
All trust abandoned in the healing might
Of virtuous action; all that courage dares,
Labour accomplishes, or patience bears—
Those helps rejected, they, whose minds perceive
How subtly works man's weakness, sighs may heave
For such a One beset with cloistral snares.
Father of Mercy! rectify his view,
If with his vows this object ill agree;
Shed over it thy grace, and thus subdue
Imperious passion in a heart set free:—
That earthly love may to herself be true,
Give him a soul that cleaveth unto thee.[1]

XVII

AT THE EREMITE OR UPPER CONVENT OF CAMALDOLI

What aim had they, the Pair of Monks, in size
Enormous, dragged, while side by side they sate,
By panting steers up to this convent gate?
How, with empurpled cheeks and pampered eyes,
Dare they confront the lean austerities
Of Brethren who, here fixed, on Jesu wait
In sackcloth, and God's anger deprecate
Through all that humbles flesh and mortifies?
Strange contrast!—verily the world of dreams,
Where mingle, as for mockery combined,
Things in their very essences at strife,
Shows not a sight incongruous as the extremes
That everywhere, before the thoughtful mind,
Meet on the solid ground of waking life.[1]

[1] See Note.

XVIII

AT VALLOMBROSA[1]

"Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where Etrurian shades
High over-arch'd embower."[2]
PARADISE LOST.

I must confess, though of course I did not acknowledge it in the few lines I wrote in the Strangers' book kept at the convent, that I was somewhat disappointed at Vallombrosa. I had expected, as the name implies, a deep and narrow valley overshadowed by enclosing hills; but the spot where the convent stands is in fact not a valley at all, but a cove or crescent open to an extensive prospect. In the book before mentioned, I read the notice in the English language that if any one would ascend the steep ground above the convent, and wander over it, he would be abundantly rewarded by magnificent views. I had not time to act upon this recommendation, and only went with my young guide to a point, nearly on a level with the site of the convent, that overlooks the vale of Arno for some leagues. To praise great and good men has ever been deemed one of the worthiest employments of poetry, but the objects of admiration vary so much with time and circumstances, and the noblest of mankind have been found, when intimately known, to be of characters so imperfect, that no eulogist can find a subject which he will venture upon with the animation necessary to create sympathy, unless he confines himself to a particular art or he takes something of a one-sided view of the person he is disposed to celebrate. This is a melancholy truth, and affords a strong reason for the poetic mind being chiefly exercised in works of fiction: the poet can then follow wherever the spirit of admiration leads him, unchecked by such suggestions as will be too apt to cross his way if all that he is prompted to utter is to be tested by fact. Something in this spirit I have written in the note attached to the sonnet on the king of Sweden; and many will think that in this poem and elsewhere I have spoken of the author of *Paradise Lost* in a strain of panegyric scarcely justifiable by the tenor of some of his opinions, whether theological or political, and by the temper he carried into public affairs in which, unfortunately for his genius, he was so much concerned.

"VALLOMBROSA—I longed in thy shadiest wood
To slumber, reclined on the moss-covered floor!"
Fond wish that was granted at last, and the Flood,
That lulled me asleep bids me listen once more.
Its murmur how soft! as it falls down the steep,
Near that Cell—yon sequestered Retreat high in air—
Where our Milton was wont lonely vigils to keep
For converse with God, sought through study and prayer.

The Monks still repeat the tradition with pride,
And its truth who shall doubt? for his Spirit is here;
In the cloud-piercing rocks doth her grandeur abide,
In the pines pointing heavenward her beauty austere;
In the flower-besprent meadows his genius we trace
Turned to humbler delights, in which youth might confide,
That would yield him fit help while prefiguring that Place
Where, if Sin had not entered, Love never had died.

When with life lengthened out came a desolate time,
And darkness and danger had compassed him round,
With a thought he would flee to these haunts of his prime
And here once again a kind shelter be found.
And let me believe that when nightly the Muse
Did waft him to Sion, the glorified hill,
Here also, on some favoured height, he would choose
To wander, and drink inspiration at will.

Vallombrosa! of thee I first heard in the page
Of that holiest of Bards, and the name for my mind
Had a musical charm, which the winter of age
And the changes it brings had no power to unbind.
And now, ye Miltonian shades! under you

---

[1] See Note.

[2] See for the two *first lines*, "Stanzas composed in the Simplon Pass."

I repose, nor am forced from sweet fancy to part,
While your leaves I behold and the brooks they will strew,
And the realised vision is clasped to my heart.

Even so, and unblamed, we rejoice as we may
In Forms that must perish, frail objects of sense;
Unblamed—if the Soul be intent on the day
When the Being of Beings shall summon her hence.
For he and he only with wisdom is blest
Who, gathering true pleasures wherever they grow,
Looks up in all places, for joy or for rest,
To the Fountain whence Time and Eternity flow.

XIX

AT FLORENCE

Upon what evidence the belief rests that this stone was a favourite seat of Dante, I do not know; but a man would little consult his own interest as a traveller, if he should busy himself with doubts as to the fact. The readiness with which traditions of this character are received, and the fidelity with which they are preserved from generation to generation, are an evidence of feelings honourable to our nature. I remember how, during one of my rambles in the course of a college vacation, I was pleased on being shown a seat near a kind of rocky cell at the source of the river, on which it was said that Congreve wrote his "Old Bachelor." One can scarcely hit on any performance less in harmony with the scene; but it was a local tribute paid to intellect by those who had not troubled themselves to estimate the moral worth of that author's comedies; and why should they? He was a man distinguished in his day; and the sequestered neighbourhood in which he often resided was perhaps as proud of him as Florence of her Dante: it is the same feeling, though proceeding from persons one cannot bring together in this way without offering some apology to the Shade of the great Visionary.

Under the shadow of a stately Pile,
The dome of Florence, pensive and alone,
Nor giving heed to aught that passed the while,
I stood, and gazed upon a marble stone,
The laurelled Dante's favourite seat. A throne,
In just esteem, it rivals; though no style
Be there of decoration to beguile
The mind, depressed by thought of greatness flown.
As a true man, who long had served the lyre,
I gazed with earnestness, and dared no more.
But in his breast the mighty Poet bore
A Patriot's heart, warm with undying fire.
Bold with the thought, in reverence I sate down,
And, for a moment, filled that empty Throne.

XX

BEFORE THE PICTURE OF THE BAPTIST, BY RAPHAEL, IN THE GALLERY AT FLORENCE

It was very hot weather during the week we stayed at Florence; and, never having been there before, I went through much hard service, and am not therefore *ashamed* to confess I fell asleep before this picture and sitting with my back towards the Venus de Medicis. Buonaparte—in answer to one who had spoken of his being in a sound sleep up to the moment when one of his great battles was to be fought, as a proof of the calmness of his mind and command over anxious thoughts—said frankly, that he slept because from bodily exhaustion he could not help it. In like manner it is noticed that criminals on the night previous to their execution seldom awake before they are called, a proof that the body is the master of us far more than we need be willing to allow. Should this note by any possible chance be seen by any of my countrymen who might have been in the gallery at the time (and several persons were there) and witnessed such an indecorum, I hope he will give up the opinion which he might naturally have formed to my prejudice.

The Baptist might have been ordained to cry
Forth from the towers of that huge Pile, wherein
His Father served Jehovah; but how win
Due audience, how for aught but scorn defy
The obstinate pride and wanton revelry
Of the Jerusalem below, her sin
And folly, if they with united din
Drown not at once mandate and prophecy

Therefore the Voice spake from the Desert, thence
To Her, as to her opposite in peace,
Silence, and holiness, and innocence,
To Her and to all Lands its warning sent,
Crying with earnestness that might not cease,
"Make straight a highway for the Lord—repent!"

XXI

AT FLORENCE—FROM MICHAEL ANGELO

However at first these two sonnets from Michael Angelo may seem in their spirit somewhat inconsistent with each other, I have not scrupled to place them side by side as characteristic of their great author, and others with whom he lived. I feel nevertheless a wish to know at what periods of his life they were respectively composed. The latter, as it expresses, was written in his advanced years when it was natural that the Platonism that pervades the one should give way to the Christian feeling that inspired the other: between both there is more than poetic affinity.

RAPT above earth by power of one fair face,
Hers in whose sway alone my heart delights,
I mingle with the blest on those pure heights
Where Man, yet mortal, rarely finds a place.
With Him who made the Work that Work accords
So well, that by its help and through his grace
I raise my thoughts, inform my deeds and words,
Clasping her beauty in my soul's embrace.
Thus, if from two fair eyes mine cannot turn,
I feel how in their presence doth abide
Light which to God is both the way and guide;
And, kindling at their lustre, if I burn,
My noble fire emits the joyful ray
That through the realms of glory shines for aye.

XXII

AT FLORENCE—FROM M. ANGELO

ETERNAL Lord! eased of a cumbrous load,
And loosened from the world, I turn to Thee;
Shun, like a shattered bark, the storm, and flee
To thy protection for a safe abode.
The crown of thorns, hands pierced upon the tree,
The meek, benign, and lacerated face,
To a sincere repentance promise grace,
To the sad soul give hope of pardon free.
With justice mark not Thou, O Light divine,
My fault, nor hear it with thy sacred ear;
Neither put forth that way thy arm severe;
Wash with thy blood my sins; thereto incline
More readily the more my years require
Help, and forgiveness speedy and entire.

XXIII

AMONG THE RUINS OF A CONVENT IN THE APENNINES

The political revolutions of our time have multiplied, on the Continent, objects that unavoidably call forth reflections such as are expressed in these verses, but the Ruins in those countries are too recent to exhibit, in anything like an equal degree, the beauty with which time and nature have invested the remains of our Convents and Abbeys. These verses it will be observed take up the beauty long before it is matured, as one cannot but wish it may be among some of the desolations of Italy, France, and Germany.

YE Trees! whose slender roots entwine
  Altars that piety neglects;
Whose infant arms enclasp the shrine
  Which no devotion now respects;
If not a straggler from the herd
Here ruminate, nor shrouded bird,
Chanting her low-voiced hymn, take pride
In aught that ye would grace or hide—
How sadly is your love misplaced,
Fair Trees, your bounty run to waste!

Ye, too, wild Flowers! that no one heeds,
And ye—full often spurned as weeds—

In beauty clothed, or breathing sweetness
From fractured arch and mouldering wall—
Do but more touchingly recall
Man's headstrong violence and Time's fleetness,
Making the precincts ye adorn
Appear to sight still more forlorn.

XXIV

IN LOMBARDY

SEE, where his difficult way that Old Man wins
Bent by a load of Mulberry leaves!—most hard
Appears *his* lot, to the small Worm's compared,
For whom his toil with early day begins.
Acknowledging no task-master, at will
(As if her labour and her ease were twins)
She seems to work, at pleasure to lie still;—
And softly sleeps within the thread she spins.
So fare they—the Man serving as her Slave.
Ere long their fates do each to each conform:
Both pass into new being,—but the Worm,
Transfigured, sinks into a hopeless grave;
His volant Spirit will, he trusts, ascend
To bliss unbounded, glory without end.

XXV

AFTER LEAVING ITALY

I had proof in several instances that the Carbonari, if I may still call them so, and their favourers, are opening their eyes to the necessity of patience, and are intent upon spreading knowledge actively but quietly as they can. May they have resolution to continue in this course! for it is the only one by which they can truly benefit their country. We left Italy by the way which is called the "Nuova Strada de Allmagna," to the east of the high passes of the Alps, which take you at once from Italy into Switzerland. This road leads across several smaller heights, and winds down different vales in succession, so that it was only by the accidental sound of a few German words that I was aware we had quitted Italy, and hence the unwelcome shock alluded to in the two or three last lines of the latter sonnet.

FAIR Land! Thee all men greet with joy; how few,
Whose souls take pride in freedom, virtue, fame,
Part from thee without pity dyed in shame:
I could not—while from Venice we withdrew,
Led on till an Alpine strait confined our view
Within its depths, and to the shore we came
Of Lago Morto, dreary sight and name,
Which o'er sad thoughts a sadder colouring threw,
Italia! on the surface of thy spirit,
(Too aptly emblemed by that torpid lake)
Shall a few partial breezes only creep?—
Be its depths quickened; what thou dost inherit
Of the world's hopes, dare to fulfil; awake,
Mother of Heroes, from thy death-like sleep!

XXVI

CONTINUED

As indignation mastered grief, my tongue
Spake bitter words; words that did ill agree
With those rich stores of Nature's imagery,
And divine Art, that fast to memory clung—
Thy gifts, magnificent Region, ever young
In the sun's eye, and in his sister's sight
How beautiful! how worthy to be sung
In strains of rapture, or subdued delight!
I feign not; witness that unwelcome shock
That followed the first sound of Germa speech,
Caught the far-winding barrier Alps among.
In that announcement, greeting seemed to mock
Parting; the casual word had power t reach
My heart, and filled that heart with conflic strong.

AT BOLOGNA, IN REMEMBRANC OF THE LATE INSURRECTIONS

1837

I

AH why deceive ourselves! by no mere fit
Of sudden passion roused shall men attai

True freedom where for ages they have lain
Bound in a dark abominable pit,
With life's best sinews more and more unknit.
Here, there, a banded few who loathe the chain
May rise to break it; effort worse than vain
For thee, O great Italian nation, split
Into those jarring fractions.—Let thy scope
Be one fixed mind for all; thy rights approve
To thy own conscience gradually renewed;
Learn to make Time the father of wise Hope;
Then trust thy cause to the arm of Fortitude,
The light of Knowledge, and the warmth of Love.

CONTINUED

II

Hard task! exclaim the undisciplined, to lean
On Patience coupled with such slow endeavour,
That long-lived servitude must last for ever.
Perish the grovelling few, who, prest between
Wrongs and the terror of redress, would wean
Millions from glorious aims. Our chains to sever
Let us break forth in tempest now or never!—
What, is there then no space for golden mean
And gradual progress?—Twilight leads to day,
And, even within the burning zones of earth,
The hastiest sunrise yields a temperate ray;
The softest breeze to fairest flowers gives birth:
Think not that Prudence dwells in dark abodes,
She scans the future with the eye of gods.

CONCLUDED

III

As leaves are to the tree whereon they grow
And wither, every human generation
Is, to the Being of a mighty nation,
Locked in our world's embrace through weal and woe;
Thought that should teach the zealot to forego
Rash schemes, to abjure all selfish agitation,
And seek through noiseless pains and moderation
The unblemished good they only can bestow.
Alas! with most, who weigh futurity
Against time present, passion holds the scales:
Hence equal ignorance of both prevails,
And nations sink; or, struggling to be free,
Are doomed to flounder on, like wounded whales
Tossed on the bosom of a stormy sea.

"WHAT IF OUR NUMBERS BARELY COULD DEFY"

What if our numbers barely could defy
The arithmetic of babes, must foreign hordes,
Slaves, vile as ever were befooled by words,
Striking through English breasts the anarchy
Of Terror, bear us to the ground, and tie
Our hands behind our backs with felon cords?
Yields every thing to discipline of swords?
Is man as good as man, none low, none high?—
Nor discipline nor valour can withstand
The shock, nor quell the inevitable rout,
When in some great extremity breaks out
A people, on their own beloved Land
Risen, like one man, to combat in the sight
Of a just God for liberty and right.

1837.

A NIGHT THOUGHT

These verses were thrown off extempore upon leaving Mrs. Luff's house at Fox-Ghyll, one evening. The good woman is not disposed to look at the bright side of things, and there happened to be present certain ladies who had reached the point of life where *youth* is ended, and who seemed to contend with each other in expressing their dislike of the country and climate. One of them had been heard to say she could not endure a country where there was "neither sunshine nor cavaliers."

Lo ! where the Moon along the sky
Sails with her happy destiny ;
Oft is she hid from mortal eye
Or dimly seen,
But when the clouds asunder fly
How bright her mien !

Far different we—a froward race,
Thousands though rich in Fortune's grace
With cherished sullenness of pace
Their way pursue,
Ingrates who wear a smileless face
The whole year through.

If kindred humours e'er would make
My spirit droop for drooping's sake,
From Fancy following in thy wake,
Bright ship of heaven !
A counter impulse let me take
And be forgiven. 1837.

TO THE PLANET VENUS

Upon its approximation (as an Evening Star) to the Earth, Jan. 1838.

What strong allurement draws, what spirit guides,
Thee, Vesper ! brightening still, as if the nearer
Thou com'st to man's abode the spot grew dearer
Night after night ? True is it Nature hides
Her treasures less and less.—Man now presides
In power, where once he trembled in his weakness ;
Science advances with gigantic strides ;
But are we aught enriched in love and meekness ?
Aught dost thou see, bright Star ! of pure and wise
More than in humbler times graced human story ;
That makes our hearts more apt to sympathise
With heaven, our souls more fit for future glory,
When earth shall vanish from our closing eyes,
Ere we lie down in our last dormitory ?
1838.

COMPOSED AT RYDAL ON MAY MORNING, 1838

This and the sonnet entitled "The Pillar o Trajan," p. 652, were composed on what we cal the "Far Terrace" at Rydal Mount, where have murmured out many thousands of verses.

If with old love of you, dear Hills ! I shar
New love of many a rival image brought
From far, forgive the wanderings of m thought :
Nor art thou wronged, sweet May ! when compare
Thy present birth-morn with thy last, s fair,
So rich to me in favours. For my lot
Then was, within the famed Egerian Grot
To sit and muse, fanned by its dewy air
Mingling with thy soft breath ! That morning too,
Warblers I heard their joy unbosoming
Amid the sunny, shadowy, Colyseum ;
Heard them, unchecked by aught of saddening hue,
For victories there won by flower-crowne Spring,
Chant in full choir their innocent Te Deum

COMPOSED ON A MAY MORNING

1838

Life with yon Lambs, like day, is jus begun,
Yet Nature seems to them a heavenl guide.
Does joy approach ? they meet the comin tide ;
And sullenness avoid, as now they shun
Pale twilight's lingering glooms,—and i the sun
Couch near their dams, with quiet satisfied
Or gambol—each with his shadow at hi side,
Varying its shape wherever he may run.
As they from turf yet hoar with sleepy de
All turn, and court the shining and th green,
Where herbs look up, and opening flower are seen ;
Why to God's goodness cannot We be true
And so, His gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new ?

"HARK! 'TIS THE THRUSH, UNDAUNTED, UNDEPREST"

HARK! 'tis the Thrush, undaunted, undeprest,
By twilight premature of cloud and rain;
Nor does that roaring wind deaden his strain
Who carols thinking of his Love and nest,
And seems, as more incited, still more blest.
Thanks; thou hast snapped a fireside Prisoner's chain,
Exulting Warbler! eased a fretted brain,
And in a moment charmed my cares to rest.
Yes, I will forth, bold Bird! and front the blast,
That we may sing together, if thou wilt,
So loud, so clear, my Partner through life's day,
Mute in her nest love-chosen, if not love-built
Like thine, shall gladden, as in seasons past,
Thrilled by loose snatches of the social Lay.

RYDAL MOUNT, 1838.

"'TIS HE WHOSE YESTER-EVENING'S HIGH DISDAIN"

'TIS He whose yester-evening's high disdain
Beat back the roaring storm—but how subdued
His day-break note, a sad vicissitude!
Does the hour's drowsy weight his glee restrain?
Or, like the nightingale, her joyous vein
Pleased to renounce, does this dear Thrush attune
His voice to suit the temper of yon Moon
Doubly depressed, setting, and in her wane?
Rise, tardy Sun! and let the Songster prove
(The balance trembling between night and morn
No longer) with what ecstasy upborne
He can pour forth his spirit. In heaven above,
And earth below, they best can serve true gladness
Who meet most feelingly the calls of sadness.

1838.

"OH WHAT A WRECK! HOW CHANGED IN MIEN AND SPEECH!"

The sad condition of poor Mrs. Southey put me upon writing this. It has afforded comfort to many persons whose friends have been similarly affected.

OH what a Wreck! how changed in mien and speech!
Yet—though dread Powers, that work in mystery, spin
Entanglings of the brain; though shadows stretch
O'er the chilled heart—reflect; far, far within
Hers is a holy Being, freed from Sin.
She is not what she seems, a forlorn wretch;
But delegated Spirits comfort fetch
To Her from heights that Reason may not win.
Like Children, She is privileged to hold
Divine communion; both do live and move,
Whate'er to shallow Faith their ways unfold,
Inly illumined by Heaven's pitying love;
Love pitying innocence not long to last,
In them—in Her our sins and sorrows past.

1838.

A PLEA FOR AUTHORS, MAY 1838

FAILING impartial measure to dispense
To every suitor, Equity is lame;
And social Justice, stript of reverence
For natural rights, a mockery and a shame;
Law but a servile dupe of false pretence,
If, guarding grossest things from common claim
Now and for ever, She to works that came
From mind and spirit, grudge a short-lived fence.
"What! lengthened privilege, a lineal tie,
For *Books!*" Yes, heartless Ones, or be it proved
That 'tis a fault in Us to have lived and loved
Like others, with like temporal hopes to die;
No public harm that Genius from her course
Be turned; and streams of truth dried up, even at their source!

A POET TO HIS GRANDCHILD

SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING

"SON of my buried Son, while thus thy hand
"Is clasping mine, it saddens me to think
'How Want may press thee down, and with thee sink
"Thy children left unfit, through vain demand
"Of culture, even to feel or understand
"My simplest Lay that to their memory
"May cling;—hard fate! which haply need not be
"Did Justice mould the statutes of the Land.
"A Book time-cherished and an honoured name
"Are high rewards; but bound they Nature's claim
"Or Reason's? No—hopes spun in timid line
"From out the bosom of a modest home
"Extend through unambitious years to come,
"My careless Little-one, for thee and thine!"

May 23, 1838.

"BLEST STATESMAN HE, WHOSE MIND'S UNSELFISH WILL"

BLEST Statesman He, whose Mind's unselfish will
Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts: whose eye
Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
Wisdom exists not; nor the humbler skill
Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill
With patient care. What tho' assaults run high,
They daunt not him who holds his ministry,
Resolute, at all hazards, to fulfil
Its duties;—prompt to move, but firm to wait,—
Knowing, things rashly sought are rarely found;
That, for the functions of an ancient State—
Strong by her charters, free because imbound,
Servant of Providence, not slave of Fate—
Perilous is sweeping change, all chance un
sound.[1]
1838.

VALEDICTORY SONNET

Closing the Volume of Sonnets published in 1838

SERVING no haughty Muse, my hands hav
here
Disposed some cultured Flowerets (draw
from spots
Where they bloomed singly, or in scattere
knots),
Each kind in several beds of one parterre;
Both to allure the casual Loiterer,
And that, so placed, my Nurslings may re
quite
Studious regard with opportune delight,
Nor be unthanked, unless I fondly err.
But metaphor dismissed, and thanks apart
Reader, farewell! My last words let then
be—
If in this book Fancy and Truth agree;
If simple Nature trained by careful Art
Through It have won a passage to th
heart;
Grant me thy love, I crave no other fee!
1838.

PROTEST AGAINST THE BALLOT

FORTH rushed from Envy sprung and Self
conceit,
A Power misnamed the SPIRIT of REFORM
And through the astonished Island swep
in storm,
Threatening to lay all orders at her feet
That crossed her way. Now stoops she t
entreat
Licence to hide at intervals her head
Where she may work, safe, undisquieted,
In a close Box, covert for Justice meet.
St. George of England! keep a watchfu
eye
Fixed on the Suitor; frustrate her request—
Stifle her hope; for, if the State comply,
From such Pandorian gift may come a Pes
Worse than the Dragon that bowed low hi
crest,
Pierced by thy spear in glorious victory.
1838.

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[1] See Note.

SONNETS

UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH

IN SERIES

1839

I

SUGGESTED BY THE VIEW OF LANCASTER CASTLE (ON THE ROAD FROM THE SOUTH)

THIS Spot—at once unfolding sight so fair
Of sea and land, with yon grey towers that still
Rise up as if to lord it over air—
Might soothe in human breasts the sense of ill,
Or charm it out of memory; yea, might fill
The heart with joy and gratitude to God
For all his bounties upon man bestowed:
Why bears it then the name of "Weeping Hill"?
Thousands, as toward yon old Lancastrian Towers,
A prison's crown, along this way they past
For lingering durance or quick death with shame,
From this bare eminence thereon have cast
Their first look—blinded as tears fell in showers
Shed on their chains; and hence that doleful name.

II

TENDERLY do we feel by Nature's law
For worst offenders: though the heart will heave
With indignation, deeply moved we grieve,
In after thought, for Him who stood in awe
Neither of God nor man, and only saw,
Lost wretch, a horrible device enthroned
On proud temptations, till the victim groaned
Under the steel his hand had dared to draw.
But oh, restrain compassion, if its course,
As oft befalls, prevent or turn aside
Judgments and aims and acts whose higher source
Is sympathy with the unforewarned, who died
Blameless—with them that shuddered o'er his grave,
And all who from the law firm safety crave.

III

THE Roman Consul doomed his sons to die
Who had betrayed their country. The stern word
Afforded (may it through all time afford)
A theme for praise and admiration high.
Upon the surface of humanity
He rested not; its depths his mind explored;
He felt; but his parental bosom's lord
Was Duty,—Duty calmed his agony.
And some, we know, when they by wilful act
A single human life have wrongly taken,
Pass sentence on themselves, confess the fact,
And, to atone for it, with soul unshaken
Kneel at the feet of Justice, and, for faith
Broken with all mankind, solicit death.

IV

Is *Death*, when evil against good has fought
With such fell mastery that a man may dare
By deeds the blackest purpose to lay bare?
Is Death, for one to that condition brought,
For him, or any one, the thing that ought
To be *most* dreaded? Lawgivers, beware,
Lest, capital pains remitting till ye spare
The murderer, ye, by sanction to that thought
Seemingly given, debase the general mind;
Tempt the vague will tried standards to disown,
Nor only palpable restraints unbind,
But upon Honour's head disturb the crown,
Whose absolute rule permits not to withstand
In the weak love of life his least command.

V

NOT to the object specially designed,
Howe'er momentous in itself it be,
Good to promote or curb depravity,
Is the wise Legislator's view confined.
His Spirit, when most severe, is oft most kind;

As all Authority in earth depends
On Love and Fear, their several powers he blends,
Copying with awe the one Paternal mind.
Uncaught by processes in show humane,
He feels how far the act would derogate
From even the humblest functions of the State;
If she, self-shorn of Majesty, ordain
That never more shall hang upon her breath
The last alternative of Life or Death.

VI

Ye brood of conscience—Spectres! that frequent
The bad Man's restless walk, and haunt his bed—
Fiends in your aspect, yet beneficent
In act, as hovering Angels when they spread
Their wings to guard the unconscious Innocent—
Slow be the Statutes of the land to share
A laxity that could not but impair
Your power to punish crime, and so prevent.
And ye, Beliefs! coiled serpent-like about
The adage on all tongues, "Murder will out,"
How shall your ancient warnings work for good
In the full might they hitherto have shown,
If for deliberate shedder of man's blood
Survive not Judgment that requires his own?

VII

Before the world had past her time of youth
While polity and discipline were weak,
The precept eye for eye, and tooth for tooth,
Came forth—a light, though but as of day-break,
Strong as could then be borne. A Master meek
Proscribed the spirit fostered by that rule,
Patience *his* law, long-suffering *his* school,
And love the end, which all through peace must seek.
But lamentably do they err who strain
His mandates, given rash impulse to control
And keep vindictive thirstings from the soul,
So far that, if consistent in their scheme,
They must forbid the State to inflict a pain
Making of social order a mere dream.

VIII

Fit retribution, by the moral code
Determined, lies beyond the State's embrace
Yet, as she may, for each peculiar case
She plants well-measured terrors in the roa
Of wrongful acts. Downward it is an broad,
And, the main fear once doomed t banishment,
Far oftener then, bad ushering worse event
Blood would be spilt that in his dark abod
Crime might lie better hid. And, shoul the change
Take from the horror due to a foul deed,
Pursuit and evidence so far must fail,
And, guilt escaping, passion then migh plead
In angry spirits for her old free range,
And the "wild justice of revenge" prevail

IX

Though to give timely warning and deter
Is one great aim of penalty, extend
Thy mental vision further and ascend
Far higher, else full surely shalt thou err.
What is a State? The wise behold in her
A creature born of time, that keeps on eye
Fixed on the statutes of Eternity,
To which her judgments reverently defer.
Speaking through Law's dispassionate voic the State
Endues her conscience with external life
And being, to preclude or quell the strife
Of individual will, to elevate
The grovelling mind, the erring to recall,
And fortify the moral sense of all.

X

Our bodily life, some plead, that life th shrine
Of an immortal spirit, is a gift
So sacred, so informed with light divine,
That no tribunal, though most wise to sif
Deed and intent, should turn the Bein adrift
Into that world where penitential tear

May not avail, nor prayer have for God's ear
A voice—that world whose veil no hand can lift
For earthly sight. "Eternity and Time,"
They urge, "have interwoven claims and rights
Not to be jeopardised through foulest crime:
The sentence rule by mercy's heaven-born lights."
Even so; but measuring not by finite sense
Infinite Power, perfect Intelligence.

XI

Ah, think how one compelled for life to abide
Locked in a dungeon needs must eat the heart
Out of his own humanity, and part
With every hope that mutual cares provide;
And, should a less unnatural doom confide
In life-long exile on a savage coast,
Soon the relapsing penitent may boast
Of yet more heinous guilt, with fiercer pride.
Hence thoughtful Mercy, Mercy sage and pure,
Sanctions the forfeiture that Law demands,
Leaving the final issue in *His* hands
Whose goodness knows no change, whose love is sure,
Who sees, foresees; who cannot judge amiss,
And wafts at will the contrite soul to bliss.

XII

See the Condemned alone within his cell
And prostrate at some moment when remorse
Stings to the quick, and, with resistless force,
Assaults the pride she strove in vain to quell.
Then mark him, him who could so long rebel,
The crime confessed, a kneeling Penitent
Before the Altar, where the Sacrament
Softens his heart, till from his eyes outwell
Tears of salvation. Welcome death! while Heaven
Does in this change exceedingly rejoice;
While yet the solemn heed the State hath given
Helps him to meet the last Tribunal's voice
In faith, which fresh offences, were he cast
On old temptations, might for ever blast.

XIII

CONCLUSION

Yes, though He well may tremble at the sound
Of his own voice, who from the judgment-seat
Sends the pale Convict to his last retreat
In death; though Listeners shudder all around,
They know the dread requital's source profound;
Nor is, they feel, its wisdom obsolete—
(Would that it were!) the sacrifice unmeet
For Christian Faith. But hopeful signs abound;
The social rights of man breathe purer air,
Religion deepens her preventive care;
Then, moved by needless fear of past abuse,
Strike not from Law's firm hand that awful rod,
But leave it thence to drop for lack of use:
Oh, speed the blessèd hour, Almighty God!

XIV

APOLOGY

The formal World relaxes her cold chain
For One who speaks in numbers; ampler scope
His utterance finds; and, conscious of the gain,
Imagination works with bolder hope
The cause of grateful reason to sustain;
And, serving Truth, the heart more strongly beats
Against all barriers which his labour meets
In lofty place, or humble Life's domain.
Enough;—before us lay a painful road,
And guidance have I sought in duteous love
From Wisdom's heavenly Father. Hence hath flowed
Patience, with trust that, whatsoe'er the way
Each takes in this high matter, all may move
Cheered with the prospect of a brighter day.

ON A PORTRAIT OF I. F., PAINTED BY MARGARET GILLIES

We gaze—nor grieve to think that we must
die,
But that the precious love this friend hath
sown
Within our hearts, the love whose flower
hath blown
Bright as if heaven were ever in its eye,
Will pass so soon from human memory;
And not by strangers to our blood alone,
But by our best descendants be unknown,
Unthought of—this may surely claim a sigh.
Yet, blessed Art, we yield not to dejection;
Thou against Time so feelingly dost strive.
Where'er, preserved in this most true reflec-
tion,
An image of her soul is kept alive,
Some lingering fragrance of the pure affec-
tion,
Whose flower with us will vanish, must
survive.

Rydal Mount,
New Year's Day, 1840.

TO I. F.

The star which comes at close of day to
shine
More heavenly bright than when it leads
the morn,
Is friendship's emblem, whether the forlorn
She visiteth, or, shedding light benign
Through shades that solemnize Life's calm
decline,
Doth make the happy happier. This have
we
Learnt, Isabel, from thy society,
Which now we too unwillingly resign
Though for brief absence. But farewell!
the page
Glimmers before my sight through thankful
tears,
Such as start forth, not seldom, to approve
Our truth, when we, old yet unchilled by
age,
Call thee, though known but for a few fleet
years,
The heart-affianced sister of our love!

Rydal Mount, *Feb.* 1840.

POOR ROBIN[1]

I often ask myself what will become of Rydal Mount after our day. Will the old walls and steps remain in front of the house and about the grounds, or will they be swept away with all the beautiful mosses and ferns and wild geraniums and other flowers which their rude construction suffered and encouraged to grow among them?—This little wild flower—"Poor Robin"—is here constantly courting my attention, and exciting what may be called a domestic interest with the varying aspects of its stalks and leaves and flowers. Strangely do the tastes of men differ according to their employment and habits of life. "What a nice well would that be," said a labouring man to me one day, "if all that rubbish was cleared off." The "*rubbish*" was some of the most beautiful mosses and lichens and ferns and other wild growths that could possibly be seen. Defend us from the tyranny of trimness and neatness showing itself in this way! Chatterton says of freedom—"Upon her head wild weeds were spread;" and depend upon it if "the marvellous boy" had undertaken to give Flora a garland, he would have preferred what we are apt to call weeds to garden-flowers. True taste has an eye for both. Weeds have been called flowers out of place. I fear the place most people would assign to them is too limited. Let them come near to our abodes, as surely they may without impropriety or disorder.

Now when the primrose makes a splendid
show,
And lilies face the March-winds in full blow
And humbler growths as moved with one
desire
Put on, to welcome spring, their best attire
Poor Robin is yet flowerless; but how gay
With his red stalks upon this sunny day!
And, as his tufts of leaves he spreads, con
tent
With a hard bed and scanty nourishment,
Mixed with the green, some shine no
lacking power
To rival summer's brightest scarlet flower
And flowers they well might seem t
passers-by
If looked at only with a careless eye;
Flowers—or a richer produce (did it suit
The season) sprinklings of ripe strawberr
fruit.

---

[1] The small wild Geranium known by tha
name.

But while a thousand pleasures come unsought,
Why fix upon his wealth or want a thought?
Is the string touched in prelude to a lay
Of pretty fancies that would round him play
When all the world acknowledged elfin sway?
Or does it suit our humour to commend
Poor Robin as a sure and crafty friend,
Whose practice teaches, spite of names to show
Bright colours whether they deceive or no?—
Nay, we would simply praise the free goodwill
With which, though slighted, he, on naked hill
Or in warm valley, seeks his part to fill;
Cheerful alike if bare of flowers as now,
Or when his tiny gems shall deck his brow:
Yet more, we wish that men by men despised,
And such as lift their foreheads overprized,
Should sometimes think, where'er they chance to spy
This child of Nature's own humility,
What recompence is kept in store or left
For all that seem neglected or bereft;
With what nice care equivalents are given,
How just, how bountiful, the hand of Heaven.
March 1840.

ON A PORTRAIT OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON UPON THE FIELD OF WATERLOO, BY HAYDON

This was composed while I was ascending Helvellyn in company with my daughter and her husband. She was on horseback and rode to the top of the hill without once dismounting, a feat which it was scarcely possible to perform except during a season of dry weather; and a guide, with whom we fell in on the mountain, told us he believed it had never been accomplished before by any one.

By Art's bold privilege Warrior and War-horse stand
On ground yet strewn with their last battle's wreck;
Let the Steed glory while his Master's hand
Lies fixed for ages on his conscious neck;
But by the Chieftain's look, though at his side
Hangs that day's treasured sword, how firm a check
Is given to triumph and all human pride!
Yon trophied Mound shrinks to a shadowy speck
In his calm presence! Him the mighty deed
Elates not, brought far nearer the grave's rest,
As shows that time-worn face, for he such seed
Has sown as yields, we trust, the fruit of fame
In Heaven; hence no one blushes for thy name,
Conqueror, 'mid some sad thoughts, divinely blest!
1840.

TO A PAINTER

The picture which gave occasion to this and the following Sonnet was from the pencil of Miss M. Gillies, who resided for several weeks under our roof at Rydal Mount.

All praise the Likeness by thy skill portrayed;
But 'tis a fruitless task to paint for me,
Who, yielding not to changes Time has made,
By the habitual light of memory see
Eyes unbedimmed, see bloom that cannot fade,
And smiles that from their birth-place ne'er shall flee
Into the land where ghosts and phantoms be;
And, seeing this, own nothing in its stead.
Couldst thou go back into far-distant years,
Or share with me, fond thought! that inward eye,
Then, and then only, Painter! could thy Art
The visual powers of Nature satisfy,
Which hold, whate'er to common sight appears,
Their sovereign empire in a faithful heart.
1841.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Though I beheld at first with blank surprise
This Work, I now have gazed on it so long

I see its truth with unreluctant eyes;
O, my Belovèd! I have done thee wrong,
Conscious of blessedness, but, whence it sprung,
Ever too heedless, as I now perceive:
Morn into noon did pass, noon into eve,
And the old day was welcome as the young,
As welcome, and as beautiful—in sooth
More beautiful, as being a thing more holy:
Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth
Of all thy goodness, never melancholy;
To thy large heart and humble mind, that cast
Into one vision, future, present, past.

1841.

"WHEN SEVERN'S SWEEPING FLOOD HAD OVERTHROWN"

When Severn's sweeping flood had overthrown
St. Mary's Church, the preacher then would cry:—
"Thus, Christian people, God his might hath shown
That ye to him your love may testify;
Haste, and rebuild the pile."—But not a stone
Resumed its place. Age after age went by,
And Heaven still lacked its due, though piety
In secret did, we trust, her loss bemoan.
But now her Spirit hath put forth its claim
In Power, and Poesy would lend her voice;
Let the new Church be worthy of its aim,
That in its beauty Cardiff may rejoice!
Oh! in the past if cause there was for shame,
Let not our times halt in their better choice.

Rydal Mount,
Jan. 23, 1842.

"INTENT ON GATHERING WOOL FROM HEDGE AND BRAKE"

Suggested by a conversation with Miss Fenwick, who along with her sister had, during their childhood, found much delight in such gatherings for the purposes here alluded to.

Intent on gathering wool from hedge and brake
Yon busy Little-ones rejoice that soon
A poor old Dame will bless them for the boon:
Great is their glee while flake they add to flake
With rival earnestness; far other strife
Than will hereafter move them, if they make
Pastime their idol, give their day of life
To pleasure snatched for reckless pleasure's sake.
Can pomp and show allay one heart-born grief?
Pains which the World inflicts can she requite?
Not for an interval however brief;
The silent thoughts that search for stedfast light,
Love from her depths, and Duty in her might,
And Faith—these only yield secure relief.

March 8, 1842.

PRELUDE

PREFIXED TO THE VOLUME ENTITLED "POEMS CHIEFLY OF EARLY AND LATE YEARS"

These verses were begun while I was on a visit to my son John at Brigham, and were finished at Rydal. As the contents of the volume, to which they are now prefixed, will be assigned to their respective classes when my poems shall be collected in one volume, I should be at a loss where with propriety to place this prelude, being too restricted in its bearing to serve for a preface for the whole. The lines towards the conclusion allude to the discontents then fomented through the country by the agitators of the Anti-Corn-Law League: the particular causes of such troubles are transitory, but disposition to excite and liability to be excited are nevertheless permanent, and therefore proper objects for the poet's regard.

In desultory walk through orchard grounds
Or some deep chestnut grove, oft have I paused
The while a Thrush, urged rather than restrained
By gusts of vernal storm, attuned his song
To his own genial instincts; and was heard
(Though not without some plaintive tones between)

To utter, above showers of blossom swept
From tossing boughs, the promise of a calm,
Which the unsheltered traveller might receive
With thankful spirit. The descant, and the wind
That seemed to play with it in love or scorn,
Encouraged and endeared the strain of words
That haply flowed from me, by fits of silence
Impelled to livelier pace. But now, my Book!
Charged with those lays, and others of like mood,
Or loftier pitch if higher rose the theme,
Go, single—yet aspiring to be joined
With thy Forerunners that through many a year
Have faithfully prepared each other's way—
Go forth upon a mission best fulfilled
When and wherever, in this changeful world,
Power hath been given to please for higher ends
Than pleasure only; gladdening to prepare
For wholesome sadness, troubling to refine,
Calming to raise; and, by a sapient Art
Diffused through all the mysteries of our Being,
Softening the toils and pains that have not ceased
To cast their shadows on our mother Earth
Since the primeval doom. Such is the grace
Which, though unsued for, fails not to descend
With heavenly inspiration; such the aim
That Reason dictates; and, as even the wish
Has virtue in it, why should hope to me
Be wanting that sometimes, where fancied ills
Harass the mind and strip from off the bowers
Of private life their natural pleasantness,
A Voice—devoted to the love whose seeds
Are sown in every human breast, to beauty
Lodged within compass of the humblest sight,
To cheerful intercourse with wood and field,
And sympathy with man's substantial griefs—
Will not be heard in vain? And in those days
When unforeseen distress spreads far and wide
Among a People mournfully cast down,
Or into anger roused by venal words
In recklessness flung out to overturn
The judgment, and divert the general heart
From mutual good—some strain of thine, my Book!
Caught at propitious intervals, may win
Listeners who not unwillingly admit
Kindly emotion tending to console
And reconcile; and both with young and old
Exalt the sense of thoughtful gratitude
For benefits that still survive, by faith
In progress, under laws divine, maintained.

RYDAL MOUNT,
March 26, 1842.

FLOATING ISLAND

My poor sister takes a pleasure in repeating these verses, which she composed not long before the beginning of her sad illness.

These lines are by the Author of the "Address to the Wind," etc., published heretofore along with my Poems.

HARMONIOUS Powers with Nature work
On sky, earth, river, lake and sea;
Sunshine and cloud, whirlwind and breeze,
All in one duteous task agree.

Once did I see a slip of earth
(By throbbing waves long undermined)
Loosed from its hold; how, no one knew,
But all might see it float, obedient to the wind;

Might see it, from the mossy shore
Dissevered, float upon the Lake,
Float with its crest of trees adorned
On which the warbling birds their pastime take.

Food, shelter, safety, there they find;
There berries ripen, flowerets bloom;
There insects live their lives, and die;
A peopled world it is; in size a tiny room.

And thus through many seasons' space
This little Island may survive;
But Nature, though we mark her not,
Will take away, may cease to give.

Perchance when you are wandering forth
Upon some vacant sunny day,
Without an object, hope, or fear,
Thither your eyes may turn—the Isle is passed away;

Buried beneath the glittering Lake,
Its place no longer to be found;
Yet the lost fragments shall remain
To fertilize some other ground. 1842.

"THE CRESCENT-MOON, THE STAR OF LOVE"

The Crescent-moon, the Star of Love,
Glories of evening, as ye there are seen
With but a span of sky between—
Speak one of you, my doubts remove,
Which is the attendant Page and which the Queen? 1842.

TO A REDBREAST—(IN SICKNESS)

Almost the only verses by our lamented Sister Sara Hutchinson.

Stay, little cheerful Robin! stay,
And at my casement sing,
Though it should prove a farewell lay
And this our parting spring.

Though I, alas! may ne'er enjoy
The promise in thy song;
A charm, *that* thought can not destroy,
Doth to thy strain belong.

Methinks that in my dying hour
Thy song would still be dear,
And with a more than earthly power
My passing Spirit cheer.

Then, little Bird, this boon confer,
Come, and my requiem sing,
Nor fail to be the harbinger
Of everlasting Spring. 1842.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

1842

I

I was impelled to write this Sonnet by the disgusting frequency with which the word *artistical*, imported with other impertinences from the Germans, is employed by writers of the present day: for artistical let them substitute artificial, and the poetry written on this system, both at home and abroad, will be for the most part much better characterised.

A Poet!—He hath put his heart to school,
Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff
Which Art hath lodged within his hand—must laugh
By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
Because the lovely little flower is free
Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
But from its *own* divine vitality.

II

Hundreds of times have I seen, hanging abou and above the vale of Rydal, clouds that migh have given birth to this Sonnet, which was throw off on the impulse of the moment one evenin when I was returning home from the favourit walk of ours, along the Rotha, under Loughrigg

The most alluring clouds that mount th sky
Owe to a troubled element their forms,
Their hues to sunset. If with raptured ey
We watch their splendour, shall we cove storms,
And wish the Lord of day his slow declin
Would hasten, that such pomp may floa on high?
Behold, already they forget to shine,

Dissolve—and leave, to him who gazed, a sigh.
Not loth to thank each moment for its boon
Of pure delight, come whencesoe'er it may,
Peace let us seek,—to stedfast things attune
Calm expectations—leaving to the gay
And volatile their love of transient bowers,
The house that cannot pass away be ours.

III

This Sonnet is recommended to the perusal of all those who consider that the evils under which we groan are to be removed or palliated by measures ungoverned by moral and religious principles.

Feel for the wrongs to universal ken
Daily exposed, woe that unshrouded lies;
And seek the Sufferer in his darkest den,
Whether conducted to the spot by sighs
And moanings, or he dwells (as if the wren
Taught him concealment) hidden from all eyes
In silence and the awful modesties
Of sorrow;—feel for all, as brother Men!
Rest not in hope want's icy chain to thaw
By casual boons and formal charities;
Learn to be just, just through impartial law;
Far as ye may, erect and equalise;
And, what ye cannot reach by statute, draw
Each from his fountain of self-sacrifice!

IV

IN ALLUSION TO VARIOUS RECENT HISTORIES AND NOTICES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Portentous change when History can appear
As the cool Advocate of foul device;
Reckless audacity extol, and jeer
At consciences perplexed with scruples nice!
They who bewail not, must abhor, the sneer
Born of Conceit, Power's blind Idolater;
Or haply sprung from vaunting Cowardice
Betrayed by mockery of holy fear.
Hath it not long been said the wrath of Man
Works not the righteousness of God? Oh bend,
Bend, ye Perverse! to judgments from on High,
Laws that lay under Heaven's perpetual ban
All principles of action that transcend
The sacred limits of humanity.

V

CONTINUED

Who ponders National events shall find
An awful balancing of loss and gain,
Joy based on sorrow, good with ill combined,
And proud deliverance issuing out of pain
And direful throes; as if the All-ruling Mind,
With whose perfection it consists to ordain
Volcanic burst, earthquake, and hurricane,
Dealt in like sort with feeble human kind
By laws immutable. But woe for him
Who thus deceived shall lend an eager hand
To social havoc. Is not Conscience ours,
And Truth, whose eye guilt only can make dim;
And Will, whose office, by divine command,
Is to control and check disordered Powers?

VI

CONCLUDED

Long-favoured England! be not thou misled
By monstrous theories of alien growth,
Lest alien frenzy seize thee, waxing wroth,
Self-smitten till thy garments reek dyed red
With thy own blood, which tears in torrents shed
Fail to wash out, tears flowing ere thy troth
Be plighted, not to ease but sullen sloth,
Or wan despair—the ghost of false hope fled
Into a shameful grave. Among thy youth,
My Country! if such warning be held dear,
Then shall a Veteran's heart be thrilled with joy,
One who would gather from eternal truth,

For time and season, rules that work to cheer—
Not scourge, to save the People—not destroy.

VII

Men of the Western World! in Fate's dark book
Whence these opprobrious leaves of dire portent?
Think ye your British Ancestors forsook
Their native Land, for outrage provident;
From unsubmissive necks the bridle shook
To give, in their Descendants, freer vent
And wider range to passions turbulent,
To mutual tyranny a deadlier look?
Nay, said a voice, soft as the south wind's breath,
Dive through the stormy surface of the flood
To the great current flowing underneath;
Explore the countless springs of silent good;
So shall the truth be better understood,
And thy grieved Spirit brighten strong in faith.[1]

VIII

Lo! where she stands fixed in a saint-like trance,
One upward hand, as if she needed rest
From rapture, lying softly on her breast!
Nor wants her eyeball an ethereal glance;
But not the less—nay more—that countenance,
While thus illumined, tells of painful strife
For a sick heart made weary of this life
By love, long crossed with adverse circumstance.
—Would She were now as when she hoped to pass
At God's appointed hour to them who tread
Heaven's sapphire pavement, yet breathed well content,
Well pleased, her foot should print earth's common grass,
Lived thankful for day's light, for daily bread,
For health, and time in obvious duty spent.

THE NORMAN BOY

The subject of this poem was sent me by Mrs. Ogle, to whom I was personally unknown, with a hope on her part that I might be induced to relate the incident in verse; and I do not regret that I took the trouble; for not improbably the fact is illustrative of the boy's early piety, and may concur with my other little pieces on children to produce profitable reflection among my youthful readers. This is said however with an absolute conviction that children will derive most benefit from books which are not unworthy the perusal of persons of any age. I protest with my whole heart against those productions, so abundant in the present day, in which the doings of children are dwelt upon as if they were incapable of being interested in anything else. On this subject I have dwelt at length in the poem on the growth of my own mind.

High on a broad unfertile tract of forest-skirted Down,
Nor kept by Nature for herself, nor made by man his own,
From home and company remote and every playful joy,
Served, tending a few sheep and goats, a raggèd Norman Boy.

Him never saw I, nor the spot; but from an English Dame,
Stranger to me and yet my friend, a simple notice came,
With suit that I would speak in verse o
that sequestered child
Whom, one bleak winter's day, she me
upon the dreary Wild.

His flock, along the woodland's edge with relics sprinkled o'er
Of last night's snow, beneath a sky threatening the fall of more,
Where tufts of herbage tempted each, were busy at their feed,
And the poor Boy was busier still, with work of anxious heed.

There *was* he, where of branches rent and withered and decayed,
For covert from the keen north wind, hi
hands a hut had made.
A tiny tenement, forsooth, and frail, a needs must be
A thing of such materials framed, by a builder such as he.

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[1] See Notes.

The hut stood finished by his pains, nor seemingly lacked aught
That skill or means of his could add, but the architect had wrought
Some limber twigs into a Cross, well-shaped with fingers nice,
To be engrafted on the top of his small edifice.

That Cross he now was fastening there, as the surest power and best
For supplying all deficiencies, all wants of the rude nest
In which, from burning heat, or tempest driving far and wide,
The innocent Boy, else shelterless, his lonely head must hide.

That Cross belike he also raised as a standard for the true
And faithful service of his heart in the worst that might ensue
Of hardship and distressful fear, amid the houseless waste
Where he, in his poor self so weak, by Providence was placed.

—Here, Lady! might I cease; but nay, let *us* before we part
With this dear holy shepherd-boy breathe a prayer of earnest heart,
That unto him, where'er shall lie his life's appointed way,
The Cross, fixed in his soul, may prove an all-sufficing stay. 1842.

THE POET'S DREAM

SEQUEL TO THE NORMAN BOY

JUST as those final words were penned, the sun broke out in power,
And gladdened all things; but, as chanced, within that very hour,
Air blackened, thunder growled, fire flashed from clouds that hid the sky,
And, for the Subject of my Verse, I heaved a pensive sigh.

Nor could my heart by second thoughts from heaviness be cleared,
For bodied forth before my eyes the cross-crowned hut appeared;
And, while around it storm as fierce seemed troubling earth and air,
I saw, within, the Norman Boy kneeling alone in prayer.

The Child, as if the thunder's voice spake with articulate call,
Bowed meekly in submissive fear, before the Lord of All;
His lips were moving; and his eyes, upraised to sue for grace,
With soft illumination cheered the dimness of that place.

How beautiful is holiness!—what wonder if the sight,
Almost as vivid as a dream, produced a dream at night?
It came with sleep and showed the Boy, no cherub, not transformed,
But the poor raggèd Thing whose ways my human heart had warmed.

Me had the dream equipped with wings, so I took him in my arms,
And lifted from the grassy floor, stilling his faint alarms,
And bore him high through yielding air my debt of love to pay,
By giving him, for both our sakes, an hour of holiday.

I whispered, "Yet a little while, dear Child! thou art my own,
To show thee some delightful thing, in country or in town.
What shall it be? a mirthful throng? or that holy place and calm
St. Denis, filled with royal tombs, or the Church of Notre Dame?

St. Ouen's golden Shrine? Or choose what else would please thee most
Of any wonder Normandy, or all proud France, can boast!"
"My Mother," said the Boy, "was born near to a blessèd Tree,
The Chapel Oak of Allonville; good Angel, show it me!"

On wings, from broad and stedfast poise let loose by this reply,
For Allonville, o'er down and dale, away then did we fly;

O'er town and tower we flew, and fields in May's fresh verdure drest;
The wings they did not flag; the Child, though grave, was not deprest.

But who shall show, to waking sense, the gleam of light that broke
Forth from his eyes, when first the Boy looked down on that huge oak,
For length of days so much revered, so famous where it stands
For twofold hallowing—Nature's care, and work of human hands?

Strong as an Eagle with my charge I glided round and round
The wide-spread boughs, for view of door, window, and stair that wound
Gracefully up the gnarled trunk; nor left we unsurveyed
The pointed steeple peering forth from the centre of the shade.

I lighted—opened with soft touch the chapel's iron door,
Past softly, leading in the Boy; and, while from roof to floor
From floor to roof all round his eyes the Child with wonder cast,
Pleasure on pleasure crowded in, each livelier than the last.

For, deftly framed within the trunk, the sanctuary showed,
By light of lamp and precious stones, that glimmered here, there glowed,
Shrine, Altar, Image, Offerings hung in sign of gratitude;
Sight that inspired accordant thoughts; and speech I thus renewed:

"Hither the Afflicted come, as thou hast heard thy Mother say,
And, kneeling, supplication make to our Lady de la Paix;
What mournful sighs have here been heard, and, when the voice was stopt
By sudden pangs; what bitter tears have on this pavement dropt!

Poor Shepherd of the naked Down, a favoured lot is thine,
Far happier lot, dear Boy, than brings full many to this shrine;
From body pains and pains of soul thou needest no release,
Thy hours as they flow on are spent, if not in joy, in peace.

Then offer up thy heart to God in thankfulness and praise,
Give to Him prayers, and many thoughts, in thy most busy days;
And in His sight the fragile Cross, on thy small hut, will be
Holy as that which long hath crowned the Chapel of this Tree;

Holy as that far seen which crowns the sumptuous Church in Rome
Where thousands meet to worship God under a mighty Dome;
He sees the bending multitude, he hears the choral rites,
Yet not the less, in children's hymns and lonely prayer, delights.

God for his service needeth not proud work of human skill;
They please him best who labour most to do in peace his will:
So let us strive to live, and to our Spirits will be given
Such wings as, when our Saviour calls, shall bear us up to heaven."

The Boy no answer made by words, but, so earnest was his look,
Sleep fled, and with it fled the dream—recorded in this book,
Lest all that passed should melt away in silence from my mind,
As visions still more bright have done, and left no trace behind.

But oh! that Country-man of thine, whose eye, loved Child, can see
A pledge of endless bliss in acts of early piety,
In verse, which to thy ear might come, would treat this simple theme,
Nor leave untold our happy flight in that adventurous dream.

Alas the dream, to thee, poor Boy! to thee from whom it flowed,
Was nothing, scarcely can be aught, yet 'twas bounteously bestowed,

If I may dare to cherish hope that gentle
eyes will read
Not loth, and listening Little-ones, heart-
touched, their fancies feed.[1]

1842.

THE WIDOW ON WINDERMERE SIDE

The facts recorded in this Poem were given me, and the character of the person described, by my friend the Rev. R. P. Graves, who has long officiated as curate at Bowness, to the great benefit of the parish and neighbourhood. The individual was well known to him. She died before these verses were composed. It is scarcely worth while to notice that the stanzas are written in the sonnet form, which was adopted when I thought the matter might be included in twenty-eight lines.

I

How beautiful when up a lofty height
Honour ascends among the humblest poor,
And feeling sinks as deep! See there the
door
Of One, a Widow, left beneath a weight
Of blameless debt. On evil Fortune's
spite
She wasted no complaint, but strove to
make
A just repayment, both for conscience-sake
And that herself and hers should stand
upright
In the world's eye. Her work when day-
light failed
Paused not, and through the depth of night
she kept
Such earnest vigils, that belief prevailed
With some, the noble Creature never slept;
But, one by one, the hand of death assailed
Her children from her inmost heart be-
wept.

II

The Mother mourned, nor ceased her tears
to flow,
Till a winter's noonday placed her buried
Son
Before her eyes, last child of many gone—
His raiment of angelic white, and lo!
His very feet bright as the dazzling snow
Which they are touching; yea far brighter,
even
As that which comes, or seems to come,
from heaven,
Surpasses aught these elements can show.
Much she rejoiced, trusting that from that
hour
Whate'er befell she could not grieve or pine;
But the Transfigured, in and out of season,
Appeared, and spiritual presence gained a
power
Over material forms that mastered reason.
Oh, gracious Heaven, in pity make her
thine!

III

But why that prayer? as if to her could
come
No good but by the way that leads to bliss
Through Death,—so judging we should
judge amiss.
Since reason failed want is her threatened
doom,
Yet frequent transports mitigate the gloom:
Nor of those maniacs is she one that kiss
The air or laugh upon a precipice;
No, passing through strange sufferings to-
ward the tomb
She smiles as if a martyr's crown were
won:
Oft, when light breaks through clouds or
waving trees,
With outspread arms and fallen upon her
knees
The Mother hails in her descending Son
An Angel, and in earthly ecstasies
Her own angelic glory seems begun.

1842.

FAREWELL LINES

These lines were designed as a farewell to Charles Lamb and his sister, who had retired from the throngs of London to comparative solitude in the village of Enfield.

"High bliss is only for a higher state,"
But, surely, if severe afflictions borne
With patience merit the reward of peace,
Peace ye deserve; and may the solid good,
Sought by a wise though late exchange, and
here
With bounteous hand beneath a cottage-
roof

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[1] See Note.

To you accorded, never be withdrawn,
Nor for the world's best promises renounced.
Most soothing was it for a welcome Friend,
Fresh from the crowded city, to behold
That lonely union, privacy so deep,
Such calm employments, such entire content.
So when the rain is over, the storm laid,
A pair of herons oft-times have I seen,
Upon a rocky islet, side by side,
Drying their feathers in the sun, at ease;
And so, when night with grateful gloom had fallen,
Two glow-worms in such nearness that they shared,
As seemed, their soft self-satisfying light,
Each with the other, on the dewy ground,
Where He that made them blesses their repose.—
When wandering among lakes and hills I note,
Once more, those creatures thus by nature paired,
And guarded in their tranquil state of life,
Even, as your happy presence to my mind
Their union brought, will they repay the debt,
And send a thankful spirit back to you,
With hope that we, dear Friends! shall meet again.

1842.

AIREY-FORCE VALLEY

——Not a breath of air
Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen.
From the brook's margin, wide around, the trees
Are stedfast as the rocks; the brook itself,
Old as the hills that feed it from afar,
Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm
Where all things else are still and motionless.
And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance
Escaped from boisterous winds that rage without,
Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt,
But to its gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash! that, pendent from the brow
Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,
Powerful almost as vocal harmony
To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe his thoughts.

1842.

"LYRE! THOUGH SUCH POWER DO IN THY MAGIC LIVE"

Lyre! though such power do in thy magic live
As might from India's farthest plain
Recall the not unwilling Maid,
Assist me to detain
The lovely Fugitive:
Check with thy notes the impulse which, betrayed
By her sweet farewell looks, I longed to aid.
Here let me gaze enrapt upon that eye,
The impregnable and awe-inspiring fort
Of contemplation, the calm port
By reason fenced from winds that sigh
Among the restless sails of vanity.
But if no wish be hers that we should part,
A humbler bliss would satisfy my heart.
Where all things are so fair,
Enough by her dear side to breathe the air
Of this Elysian weather;
And, on or in, or near, the brook, espy
Shade upon the sunshine lying
Faint and somewhat pensively;
And downward Image gaily vying
With its upright living tree
'Mid silver clouds, and openings of blue sky
As soft almost and deep as her cerulean eye.

Nor less the joy with many a glance
Cast up the Stream or down at her beseeching,
To mark its eddying foam-balls prettily distrest
By ever-changing shape and want of rest;
Or watch, with mutual teaching,
The current as it plays
In flashing leaps and stealthy creeps
Adown a rocky maze;
Or note (translucent summer's happiest chance!)
In the slope-channel floored with pebbles bright,
Stones of all hues, gem emulous of gem,
So vivid that they take from keenest sight
The liquid veil that seeks not to hide them.

1842.

TO THE CLOUDS

These verses were suggested while I was walking on the foot-road between Rydal Mount and Grasmere. The clouds were driving over the top of Nab-Scar across the vale: they set my thoughts agoing, and the rest followed almost immediately.

ARMY of Clouds! ye wingèd Hosts in troops
Ascending from behind the motionless brow
Of that tall rock, as from a hidden world,
Oh whither with such eagerness of speed?
What seek ye, or what shun ye? of the gale
Companions, fear ye to be left behind,
Or racing o'er your blue ethereal field
Contend ye with each other? of the sea
Children, thus post ye over vale and height
To sink upon your mother's lap—and rest?
Or were ye rightlier hailed, when first mine eyes
Beheld in your impetuous march the likeness
Of a wide army pressing on to meet
Or overtake some unknown enemy?—
But your smooth motions suit a peaceful aim;
And Fancy, not less aptly pleased, compares
Your squadrons to an endless flight of birds
Aerial, upon due migration bound
To milder climes; or rather do ye urge
In caravan your hasty pilgrimage
To pause at last on more aspiring heights
Than these, and utter your devotion there
With thunderous voice? Or are ye jubilant,
And would ye, tracking your proud lord the Sun,
Be present at his setting; or the pomp
Of Persian mornings would ye fill, and stand
Poising your splendours high above the heads
Of worshippers kneeling to their up-risen God?
Whence, whence, ye Clouds! this eagerness of speed?
Speak, silent creatures.—They are gone, are fled,
Buried together in yon gloomy mass
That loads the middle heaven; and clear and bright
And vacant doth the region which they thronged
Appear; a calm descent of sky conducting
Down to the unapproachable abyss,
Down to that hidden gulf from which they rose
To vanish—fleet as days and months and years,
Fleet as the generations of mankind,
Power, glory, empire, as the world itself,
The lingering world, when time hath ceased to be.
But the winds roar, shaking the rooted trees,
And see! a bright precursor to a train
Perchance as numerous, overpeers the rock
That sullenly refuses to partake
Of the wild impulse. From a fount of life
Invisible, the long procession moves
Luminous or gloomy, welcome to the vale
Which they are entering, welcome to mine eye
That sees them, to my soul that owns in them,
And in the bosom of the firmament
O'er which they move, wherein they are contained,
A type of her capacious self and all
Her restless progeny.
A humble walk
Here is my body doomed to tread, this path,
A little hoary line and faintly traced,
Work, shall we call it, of the shepherd's foot
Or of his flock?—joint vestige of them both.
I pace it unrepining, for my thoughts
Admit no bondage and my words have wings.
Where is the Orphean lyre, or Druid harp,
To accompany the verse? The mountain blast
Shall be our *hand* of music; he shall sweep
The rocks, and quivering trees, and billowy lake,
And search the fibres of the caves, and they
Shall answer, for our song is of the Clouds
And the wind loves them; and the gentle gales—
Which by their aid re-clothe the naked lawn
With annual verdure, and revive the woods,
And moisten the parched lips of thirsty flowers—
Love them; and every idle breeze of air

Bends to the favourite burthen. Moon and stars
Keep their most solemn vigils when the Clouds
Watch also, shifting peaceably their place
Like bands of ministering Spirits, or when they lie,
As if some Protean art the change had wrought,
In listless quiet o'er the ethereal deep
Scattered, a Cyclades of various shapes
And all degrees of beauty. O ye Lightnings!
Ye are their perilous offspring; and the Sun—
Source inexhaustible of life and joy,
And type of man's far-darting reason, therefore
In old time worshipped as the god of verse,
A blazing intellectual deity—
Loves his own glory in their looks, and showers
Upon that unsubstantial brotherhood
Visions with all but beatific light
Enriched—too transient were they not renewed
From age to age, and did not, while we gaze
In silent rapture, credulous desire
Nourish the hope that memory lacks not power
To keep the treasure unimpaired. Vain thought!
Yet why repine, created as we are
For joy and rest, albeit to find them only
Lodged in the bosom of eternal things?
1842.

"WANSFELL![1] THIS HOUSEHOLD HAS A FAVOURED LOT"

Wansfell! this Household has a favoured lot,
Living with liberty on thee to gaze,
To watch while Morn first crowns thee with her rays,
Or when along thy breast serenely float
Evening's angelic clouds. Yet ne'er a note
Hath sounded (shame upon the Bard!) thy praise
For all that thou, as if from heaven, hast brought
Of glory lavished on our quiet days.
Bountiful Son of Earth! when we are gone
From every object dear to mortal sight,
As soon we shall be, may these words attest
How oft, to elevate our spirits, shone
Thy visionary majesties of light,
How in thy pensive glooms our hearts found rest.
Dec. 24, 1842.

THE EAGLE AND THE DOVE

Shade of Caractacus, if spirits love
The cause they fought for in their earthly home
To see the Eagle ruffled by the Dove
May soothe thy memory of the chains of Rome.

These children claim thee for their sire; the breath
Of thy renown, from Cambrian mountains, fans
A flame within them that despises death
And glorifies the truant youth of Vannes.

With thy own scorn of tyrants they advance,
But truth divine has sanctified their rage,
A silver cross enchased with flowers of France
Their badge, attests the holy fight they wage.

The shrill defiance of the young crusade
Their veteran foes mock as an idle noise;
But unto Faith and Loyalty comes aid
From Heaven, gigantic force to beardless boys.
1842.

GRACE DARLING

Among the dwellers in the silent fields
The natural heart is touched, and public way
And crowded street resound with ballad strains,
Inspired by ONE whose very name bespeaks
Favour divine, exalting human love;
Whom, since her birth on bleak Northumbria's coast,

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[1] The hill that rises to the south-east, above Ambleside.

Known unto few but prized as far as known,
A single Act endears to high and low
Through the whole land—to Manhood, moved in spite
Of the world's freezing cares—to generous Youth—
To Infancy, that lisps her praise—to Age
Whose eye reflects it, glistening through a tear
Of tremulous admiration. Such true fame
Awaits her *now;* but, verily, good deeds
Do not imperishable record find
Save in the rolls of heaven, where hers may live
A theme for angels, when they celebrate
The high-souled virtues which forgetful earth
Has witnessed. Oh! that winds and waves could speak
Of things which their united power called forth
From the pure depths of her humanity!
A Maiden gentle, yet, at duty's call,
Firm and unflinching, as the Lighthouse reared
On the Island-rock, her lonely dwelling-place;
Or like the invincible Rock itself that braves,
Age after age, the hostile elements,
As when it guarded holy Cuthbert's cell.
All night the storm had raged, nor ceased, nor paused,
When, as day broke, the Maid, through misty air,
Espies far off a Wreck, amid the surf,
Beating on one of those disastrous isles—
Half of a Vessel, half—no more; the rest
Had vanished, swallowed up with all that there
Had for the common safety striven in vain,
Or thither thronged for refuge. With quick glance
Daughter and Sire through optic-glass discern,
Clinging about the remnant of this Ship,
Creatures—how precious in the Maiden's sight!
For whom, belike, the old Man grieves still more
Than for their fellow-sufferers engulfed
Where every parting agony is hushed,
And hope and fear mix not in further strife.
"But courage, Father! let us out to sea—
A few may yet be saved." The Daughter's words,
Her earnest tone, and look beaming with faith,
Dispel the Father's doubts: nor do they lack
The noble-minded Mother's helping hand
To launch the boat; and with her blessing cheered,
And inwardly sustained by silent prayer,
Together they put forth, Father and Child!
Each grasps an oar, and struggling on they go—
Rivals in effort; and, alike intent
Here to elude and there surmount, they watch
The billows lengthening, mutually crossed
And shattered, and re-gathering their might;
As if the tumult, by the Almighty's will
Were, in the conscious sea, roused and prolonged
That woman's fortitude—so tried, so proved—
May brighten more and more!
True to the mark,
They stem the current of that perilous gorge,
Their arms still strengthening with the strengthening heart,
Though danger, as the Wreck is neared, becomes
More imminent. Not unseen do they approach;
And rapture, with varieties of fear
Incessantly conflicting, thrills the frames
Of those who, in that dauntless energy,
Foretaste deliverance; but the least perturbed
Can scarcely trust his eyes, when he perceives
That of the pair—tossed on the waves to bring
Hope to the hopeless, to the dying, life—
One is a Woman, a poor earthly sister,
Or, be the Visitant other than she seems,
A guardian Spirit sent from pitying Heaven,
In woman's shape. But why prolong the tale,
Casting weak words amid a host of thoughts
Armed to repel them? Every hazard faced
And difficulty mastered, with resolve

That no one breathing should be left to perish,
This last remainder of the crew are all
Placed in the little boat, then o'er the deep
Are safely borne, landed upon the beach,
And, in fulfilment of God's mercy, lodged
Within the sheltering Lighthouse.—Shout, ye Waves
Send forth a song of triumph. Waves and Winds,
Exult in this deliverance wrought through faith
In Him whose Providence your rage hath served!
Ye screaming Sea-mews, in the concert join!
And would that some immortal Voice—a Voice
Fitly attuned to all that gratitude
Breathes out from floor or couch, through pallid lips
Of the survivors—to the clouds might bear—
Blended with praise of that parental love,
Beneath whose watchful eye the Maiden grew
Pious and pure, modest and yet so brave,
Though young so wise, though meek so resolute—
Might carry to the clouds and to the stars,
Yea, to celestial Choirs, GRACE DARLING'S name! 1843.

"WHILE BEAMS OF ORIENT LIGHT SHOOT WIDE AND HIGH"

WHILE beams of orient light shoot wide and high,
Deep in the vale a little rural Town[1]
Breathes forth a cloud-like creature of its own,
That mounts not toward the radiant morning sky,
But, with a less ambitious sympathy,
Hangs o'er its Parent waking to the cares
Troubles and toils that every day prepares.
So Fancy, to the musing Poet's eye,
Endears that Lingerer. And how blest her sway
(Like influence never may my soul reject)
If the calm Heaven, now to its zenith decked
With glorious forms in numberless array,
To the lone shepherd on the hills disclose
Gleams from a world in which the saints repose.

Jan. 1, 1843.

TO THE REV. CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, D.D., MASTER OF HARROW SCHOOL

After the perusal of his *Theophilus Anglicanus*, recently published.

ENLIGHTENED Teacher, gladly from thy hand
Have I received this proof of pains bestowed
By Thee to guide thy Pupils on the road
That, in our native isle, and every land,
The Church, when trusting in divine command
And in her Catholic attributes, hath trod:
O may these lessons be with profit scanned
To thy heart's wish, thy labour blest by God!
So the bright faces of the young and gay
Shall look more bright—the happy, happier still;
Catch, in the pauses of their keenest play,
Motions of thought which elevate the will
And, like the Spire that from your classic Hill
Points heavenward, indicate the end and way.

RYDAL MOUNT, *Dec.* 11, 1843.

INSCRIPTION

FOR A MONUMENT IN CROSTHWAITE CHURCH, IN THE VALE OF KESWICK

YE vales and hills whose beauty hither drew
The poet's steps, and fixed him here, on you
His eyes have closed! And ye, loved books, no more
Shall Southey feed upon your precious lore,
To works that ne'er shall forfeit their renown,
Adding immortal labours of his own—
Whether he traced historic truth, with zeal
For the State's guidance, or the Church's weal,

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[1] Ambleside.

Or Fancy, disciplined by studious art,
Informed his pen, or wisdom of the heart,
Or judgments sanctioned in the Patriot's mind
By reverence for the rights of all mankind.
Wide were his aims, yet in no human breast
Could private feelings meet for holier rest.
His joys, his griefs, have vanished like a cloud
From Skiddaw's top; but he to heaven was vowed
Through his industrious life, and Christian faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.
1843.

ON THE PROJECTED KENDAL AND WINDERMERE RAILWAY

Is then no nook of English ground secure
From rash assault?[1] Schemes of retirement sown
In youth, and 'mid the busy world kept pure
As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown,
Must perish;—how can they this blight endure?
And must he too the ruthless change bemoan
Who scorns a false utilitarian lure
'Mid his paternal fields at random thrown?
Baffle the threat, bright Scene, from Orresthead
Given to the pausing traveller's rapturous glance:
Plead for thy peace, thou beautiful romance
Of nature; and, if human hearts be dead,
Speak, passing winds; ye torrents, with your strong
And constant voice, protest against the wrong.

October 12, 1844.

"PROUD WERE YE, MOUNTAINS, WHEN, IN TIMES OF OLD"

PROUD were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,
Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,
Intrenched your brows; ye gloried in each scar:
Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst of Gold,
That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star,
Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold,
And clear way made for her triumphal car
Through the beloved retreats your arms enfold!
Heard YE that Whistle? As her long-linked Train
Swept onwards, did the vision cross your view?
Yes, ye were startled;—and, in balance true,
Weighing the mischief with the promised gain,
Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you
To share the passion of a just disdain.
1844.

AT FURNESS ABBEY

HERE, where, of havoc tired and rash undoing,
Man left this Structure to become Time's prey
A soothing spirit follows in the way
That Nature takes, her counter-work pursuing.
See how her Ivy clasps the sacred Ruin
Fall to prevent or beautify decay;
And, on the mouldered walls, how bright, how gay,
The flowers in pearly dews their bloom renewing!
Thanks to the place, blessings upon the hour;
Even as I speak the rising Sun's first smile
Gleams on the grass-crowned top of yon tall Tower
Whose cawing occupants with joy proclaim
Prescriptive title to the shattered pile
Where, Cavendish, *thine* seems nothing but a name!
1844.

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[1] The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be over-rated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. "Fell it!" exclaimed the yeoman, "I had rather fall on my knees and worship it." It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property, and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling.

"FORTH FROM A JUTTING RIDGE, AROUND WHOSE BASE"

FORTH from a jutting ridge, around whose base
Winds our deep Vale, two heath-clad Rocks ascend
In fellowship, the loftiest of the pair
Rising to no ambitious height; yet both,
O'er lake and stream, mountain and flowery mead,
Unfolding prospects fair as human eyes
Ever beheld. Up-led with mutual help,
To one or other brow of those twin Peaks
Were two adventurous Sisters wont to climb,
And took no note of the hour while thence they gazed,
The blooming heath their couch, gazed, side by side,
In speechless admiration. I, a witness
And frequent sharer of their calm delight
With thankful heart, to either Eminence
Gave the baptismal name each Sister bore.
Now are they parted, far as Death's cold hand
Hath power to part the Spirits of those who love
As they did love. Ye kindred Pinnacles—
That, while the generations of mankind
Follow each other to their hiding-place
In time's abyss, are privileged to endure
Beautiful in yourselves, and richly graced
With like command of beauty—grant your aid
For MARY'S humble, SARAH'S silent claim,
That their pure joy in nature may survive
From age to age in blended memory.
1845.

THE WESTMORELAND GIRL

TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

PART I

SEEK who will delight in fable
I shall tell you truth. A Lamb
Leapt from this steep bank to follow
'Cross the brook its thoughtless dam.

Far and wide on hill and valley
Rain had fallen, unceasing rain,
And the bleating mother's Young-one
Struggled with the flood in vain:

But, as chanced, a Cottage-maiden
(Ten years scarcely had she told)
Seeing, plunged into the torrent,
Clasped the Lamb and kept her hold.

Whirled adown the rocky channel,
Sinking, rising, on they go,
Peace and rest, as seems, before them
Only in the lake below.

Oh! it was a frightful current
Whose fierce wrath the Girl had braved;
Clap your hands with joy my Hearers,
Shout in triumph, both are saved;

Saved by courage that with danger
Grew, by strength the gift of love,
And belike a guardian angel
Came with succour from above.

PART II

Now, to a maturer Audience,
Let me speak of this brave Child
Left among her native mountains
With wild Nature to run wild.

So, unwatched by love maternal,
Mother's care no more her guide,
Fared this little bright-eyed Orphan
Even while at her father's side.

Spare your blame,—remembrance makes him
Loth to rule by strict command;
Still upon his cheek are living
Touches of her infant hand,

Dear caresses given in pity,
Sympathy that soothed his grief,
As the dying mother witnessed
To her thankful mind's relief.

Time passed on; the Child was happy,
Like a Spirit of air she moved,
Wayward, yet by all who knew her
For her tender heart beloved.

Scarcely less than sacred passions,
Bred in house, in grove, and field,
Link her with the inferior creatures,
Urge her powers their rights to shield.

Anglers, bent on reckless pastime,
Learn how she can feel alike
Both for tiny harmless minnow
And the fierce and sharp-toothed pike.

Merciful protectress, kindling
Into anger or disdain;
Many a captive hath she rescued,
Others saved from lingering pain.

Listen yet awhile;—with patience
Hear the homely truths I tell,
She in Grasmere's old church-steeple
Tolled this day the passing-bell.

Yes, the wild Girl of the mountains
To their echoes gave the sound,
Notice punctual as the minute,
Warning solemn and profound.

She, fulfilling her sire's office,
Rang alone the far-heard knell,
Tribute, by her hand, in sorrow,
Paid to One who loved her well.

When his spirit was departed
On that service she went forth;
Nor will fail the like to render
When his corse is laid in earth.

What then wants the Child to temper,
In her breast, unruly fire,
To control the froward impulse
And restrain the vague desire?

Easily a pious training
And a stedfast outward power
Would supplant the weeds and cherish,
In their stead, each opening flower.

Thus the fearless Lamb-deliv'rer,
Woman-grown, meek-hearted, sage,
May become a blest example
For her sex, of every age.

Watchful as a wheeling eagle,
Constant as a soaring lark,
Should the country need a heroine,
She might prove our Maid of Arc.

Leave that thought; and here be uttered
Prayer that Grace divine may raise
Her humane courageous spirit
Up to heaven, thro' peaceful ways.
June 6, 1845.

AT FURNESS ABBEY

WELL have yon Railway Labourers to THIS ground
Withdrawn for noontide rest. They sit, they walk
Among the Ruins, but no idle talk
Is heard; to grave demeanour all are bound;
And from one voice a Hymn with tuneful sound
Hallows once more the long-deserted Quire
And thrills the old sepulchral earth, around.
Others look up, and with fixed eyes admire
That wide-spanned arch, wondering how it was raised,
To keep, so high in air, its strength and grace:
All seem to feel the spirit of the place,
And by the general reverence God is praised:
Profane Despoilers, stand ye not reproved,
While thus these simple-hearted men are moved?
June 21, 1845.

"YES! THOU ART FAIR, YET BE NOT MOVED"

YES! thou art fair, yet be not moved
To scorn the declaration,
That sometimes I in thee have loved
My fancy's own creation.

Imagination needs must stir;
Dear Maid, this truth believe,
Minds that have nothing to confer
Find little to perceive.

Be pleased that nature made thee fit
To feed my heart's devotion,
By laws to which all Forms submit
In sky, air, earth, and ocean.
1845.

"WHAT HEAVENLY SMILES! O LADY MINE"

WHAT heavenly smiles! O Lady mine
Through my very heart they shine;
And, if my brow gives back their light,
Do thou look gladly on the sight;
As the clear Moon with modest pride
Beholds her own bright beams
Reflected from the mountain's side
And from the headlong streams.
1845.

TO A LADY

IN ANSWER TO A REQUEST THAT I WOULD WRITE HER A POEM UPON SOME DRAWINGS THAT SHE HAD MADE OF FLOWERS IN THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA

FAIR Lady! can I sing of flowers
That in Madeira bloom and fade,
I who ne'er sate within their bowers,
Nor through their sunny lawns have strayed?
How they in sprightly dance are worn
By Shepherd-groom or May-day queen,
Or holy festal pomps adorn,
These eyes have never seen.

Yet tho' to me the pencil's art
No like remembrances can give,
Your portraits still may reach the heart
And there for gentle pleasure live;
While Fancy ranging with free scope
Shall on some lovely Alien set
A name with us endeared to hope,
To peace, or fond regret.

Still as we look with nicer care,
Some new resemblance we may trace:
A *Heart's-ease* will perhaps be there,
A *Speedwell* may not want its place.
And so may we, with charmèd mind
Beholding what your skill has wrought,
Another *Star-of-Bethlehem* find,
A new *Forget-me-not.*

From earth to heaven with motion fleet
From heaven to earth our thoughts will pass,
A *Holy-thistle* here we meet
And there a *Shepherd's weather-glass;*
And haply some familiar name
Shall grace the fairest, sweetest, plant
Whose presence cheers the drooping frame
Of English Emigrant.

Gazing she feels its powers beguile
Sad thoughts, and breathes with easier breath;
Alas! that meek that tender smile
Is but a harbinger of death:
And pointing with a feeble hand
She says, in faint words by sighs broken,
Bear for me to my native land
This precious Flower, true love's last token.
1845.

"GLAD SIGHT WHEREVER NEW WITH OLD"

GLAD sight wherever new with old
Is joined through some dear homeborn tie
The life of all that we behold
Depends upon that mystery.
Vain is the glory of the sky,
The beauty vain of field and grove,
Unless, while with admiring eye
We gaze, we also learn to love. 1845.

LOVE LIES BLEEDING

It has been said that the English, though their country has produced so many great poets, is now the most unpoetical nation in Europe. It is probably true; for they have more temptation to become so than any other European people. Trade, commerce, and manufactures, physical science, and mechanic arts, out of which so much wealth has arisen, have made our countrymen infinitely less sensible to movements of imagination and fancy than were our forefathers in their simple state of society. How touching and beautiful were, in most instances, the names they gave to our indigenous flowers, or any other they were familiarly acquainted with!—Every month for many years have we been importing plants and flowers from all quarters of the globe, many of which are spread through our gardens, and some perhaps likely to be met with on the few Commons which we have left. Will their botanical names ever be displaced by plain English appellations, which will bring them home to our hearts by connection with our joys and sorrows? It can never be, unless society treads back her steps towards those simplicities which have been banished by the undue influence of towns spreading and spreading in every direction, so that city-life with every generation takes more and more the lead of rural. Among the ancients, villages were reckoned the seats of barbarism. Refinement, for the most part false, increases the desire to accumulate wealth; and while theories of political economy are boastfully pleading for the practice, inhumanity pervades all our dealings in buying and selling. This selfishness wars against disinterested imagination in all directions, and, evils coming round in a circle, barbarism spreads in every quarter of our island. Oh for the reign of justice, and then the humblest man among us would have more power and dignity in and about him than the highest have now!

YOU call it, "Love lies bleeding,"—so you may,

Though the red Flower, not prostrate, only droops,
As we have seen it here from day to day,
From month to month, life passing not away:
A flower how rich in sadness! Even thus stoops,
(Sentient by Grecian sculpture's marvellous power)
Thus leans, with hanging brow and body bent
Earthward in uncomplaining languishment
The dying Gladiator. So, sad Flower!
('Tis Fancy guides me willing to be led,
Though by a slender thread,)
So drooped Adonis bathed in sanguine dew
Of his death-wound, when he from innocent air
The gentlest breath of resignation drew;
While Venus in a passion of despair
Rent, weeping over him, her golden hair
Spangled with drops of that celestial shower.
She suffered, as Immortals sometimes do;
But pangs more lasting far, *that* Lover knew
Who first, weighed down by scorn, in some lone bower
Did press this semblance of unpitied smart
Into the service of his constant heart,
His own dejection, downcast Flower! could share
With thine, and gave the mournful name which thou wilt ever bear. 1845.

COMPANION TO THE FOREGOING

Never enlivened with the liveliest ray
That fosters growth or checks or cheers decay,
Nor by the heaviest rain-drops more depress,
This Flower, that first appeared as summer's guest,
Preserves her beauty 'mid autumnal leaves
And to her mournful habits fondly cleaves.
When files of stateliest plants have ceased to bloom,
One after one submitting to their doom,
When her coevals each and all are fled,
What keeps her thus reclined upon her lonesome bed?

The old mythologists, more impressed than we
Of this late day by character in tree
Or herb, that claimed peculiar sympathy,
Or by the silent lapse of fountain clear,
Or with the language of the viewless air
By bird or beast made vocal, sought a cause
To solve the mystery, not in Nature's laws
But in Man's fortunes. Hence a thousand tales
Sung to the plaintive lyre in Grecian vales.
Nor doubt that something of their spirit swayed
The fancy-stricken Youth or heart-sick Maid,
Who, while each stood companionless and eyed
This undeparting Flower in crimson dyed,
Thought of a wound which death is slow to cure,
A fate that has endured and will endure,
And, patience coveting yet passion feeding,
Called the dejected Lingerer, *Loves lies bleeding*. 1845.

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK

Of this clock I have nothing further to say than what the poem expresses, except that it must be here recorded that it was a present from the dear friend for whose sake these notes were chiefly undertaken, and who has written them from my dictation.

Wouldst thou be taught, when sleep has taken flight,
By a sure voice that can most sweetly tell,
How far off yet a glimpse of morning light,
And if to lure the truant back be well,
Forbear to covet a Repeater's stroke,
That, answering to thy touch, will sound the hour;
Better provide thee with a Cuckoo-clock
For service hung behind thy chamber-door;
And in due time the soft spontaneous shock,
The double note, as if with living power,
Will to composure lead—or make thee blithe as bird in bower.

List, Cuckoo—Cuckoo!—oft tho' tempests howl,
Or nipping frost remind thee trees are bare,
How cattle pine, and droop the shivering fowl,
Thy spirits will seem to feed on balmy air:

I speak with knowledge,—by that Voice beguiled,
Thou wilt salute old memories as they throng
Into thy heart; and fancies, running wild
Through fresh green fields, and budding groves among,
Will make thee happy, happy as a child:
Of sunshine wilt thou think, and flowers, and song,
And breathe as in a world where nothing can go wrong.

And know—that, even for him who shuns the day
And nightly tosses on a bed of pain;
Whose joys, from all but memory swept away,
Must come unhoped for, if they come again;
Know—that, for him whose waking thoughts, severe
As his distress is sharp, would scorn my theme,
The mimic notes, striking upon his ear
In sleep, and intermingling with his dream,
Could from sad regions send him to a dear
Delightful land of verdure, shower and gleam,
To mock the *wandering* Voice beside some haunted stream.

O bounty without measure! while the grace
Of Heaven doth in such wise, from humblest springs,
Pour pleasure forth, and solaces that trace
A mazy course along familiar things,
Well may our hearts have faith that blessings come,
Streaming from founts above the starry sky,
With angels when their own untroubled home
They leave, and speed on nightly embassy
To visit earthly chambers,—and for whom?
Yea, both for souls who God's forbearance try,
And those that seek his help, and for his mercy sigh.
1845.

"SO FAIR, SO SWEET, WITHAL SO SENSITIVE"

So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive,
Would that the little Flowers were born to live,
Conscious of half the pleasure which they give;

That to this mountain-daisy's self were known
The beauty of its star-shaped shadow, thrown
On the smooth surface of this naked stone!

And what if hence a bold desire should mount
High as the Sun, that he could take account
Of all that issues from his glorious fount!

So might he ken how by his sovereign aid
These delicate companionships are made;
And how he rules the pomp of light and shade;

And were the Sister-power that shines by night
So privileged, what a countenance of delight
Would through the clouds break forth on human sight!

Fond fancies! wheresoe'er shall turn thine eye
On earth, air, ocean, or the starry sky,
Converse with Nature in pure sympathy;

All vain desires, all lawless wishes quelled,
Be Thou to love and praise alike impelled,
Whatever boon is granted or withheld.
1845.

TO THE PENNSYLVANIANS

Days undefiled by luxury or sloth,
Firm self-denial, manners grave and staid,
Rights equal, laws with cheerfulness obeyed,
Words that require no sanction from an oath,
And simple honesty a common growth—
This high repute, with bounteous Nature's aid,
Won confidence, now ruthlessly betrayed
At will, your power the measure of your troth!—
All who revere the memory of Penn
Grieve for the land on whose wild woods his name
Was fondly grafted with a virtuous aim,
Renounced, abandoned by degenerate Men
For state-dishonour black as ever came
To upper air from Mammon's loathsome den.
1845.

"YOUNG ENGLAND—WHAT IS THEN BECOME OF OLD"

Young England—what is then become of Old
Of dear Old England? Think they she is dead,
Dead to the very name? Presumption fed
On empty air! That name will keep its hold
In the true filial bosom's inmost fold
For ever.—The Spirit of Alfred, at the head
Of all who for her rights watched, toiled and bled,
Knows that this prophecy is not too bold.
What—how! shall she submit in will and deed
To Beardless Boys—an imitative race,
The *servum pecus* of a Gallic breed?
Dear Mother! if thou *must* thy steps retrace,
Go where at least meek Innocency dwells;
Let Babes and Sucklings be thy oracles.

1845.

"THOUGH THE BOLD WINGS OF POESY AFFECT"

Though the bold wings of Poesy affect
The clouds, and wheel around the mountain tops
Rejoicing, from her loftiest height she drops
Well pleased to skim the plain with wild flowers deckt
Or muse in solemn grove whose shades protect
The lingering dew—there steals along, or stops
Watching the least small bird that round her hops,
Or creeping worm, with sensitive respect.
Her functions are they therefore less divine,
Her thoughts less deep, or void of grave intent
Her simplest fancies? Should that fear be thine,
Aspiring Votary, ere thy hand present
One offering, kneel before her modest shrine,
With brow in penitential sorrow bent!

1845.

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF THE BIRD OF PARADISE

This subject has been treated of in another note. I will here only by way of comment direct attention to the fact that pictures of animals and other productions of nature as seen in conservatories, menageries, museums, etc., would do little for the national mind, nay they would be rather injurious to it, if the imagination were excluded by the presence of the object, more or less out of a state of nature. If it were not that we learn to talk and think of the lion and the eagle, the palm-tree and even the cedar, from the impassioned introduction of them so frequently into Holy Scripture and by great poets, and divines who write as poets, the spiritual part of our nature, and therefore the higher part of it, would derive no benefit from such intercourse with such objects.

The gentlest Poet, with free thoughts endowed,
And a true master of the glowing strain,
Might scan the narrow province with disdain
That to the Painter's skill is here allowed.
This, this the Bird of Paradise! disclaim
The daring thought, forget the name;
This the Sun's Bird, whom Glendoveers might own
As no unworthy Partner in their flight
Through seas of ether, where the ruffling sway
Of nether air's rude billows is unknown;
Whom Sylphs, if e'er for casual pastime they
Through India's spicy regions wing their way,
Might bow to as their Lord. What character,
O sovereign Nature! I appeal to thee,
Of all thy feathered progeny
Is so unearthly, and what shape so fair?
So richly decked in variegated down,
Green, sable, shining yellow, shadowy brown,
Tints softly with each other blended,
Hues doubtfully begun and ended;
Or intershooting, and to sight
Lost and recovered, as the rays of light
Glance on the conscious plumes touched here and there?
Full surely, when with such proud gifts of life
Began the pencil's strife,
O'erweening Art was caught as in a snare.

A sense of seemingly presumptuous wrong
Gave the first impulse to the Poet's song;
But, of his scorn repenting soon, he drew
A juster judgment from a calmer view;
And, with a spirit freed from discontent,
Thankfully took an effort that was meant
Not with God's bounty, Nature's love to vie,
Or made with hope to please that inward eye
Which ever strives in vain itself to satisfy,
But to recall the truth by some faint trace
Of power ethereal and celestial grace,
That in the living Creature find on earth a place. 1845.

SONNET

Why should we weep or mourn, Angelic boy,
For such thou wert ere from our sight removed,
Holy, and ever dutiful—beloved
From day to day with never-ceasing joy,
And hopes as dear as could the heart employ
In aught to earth pertaining? Death has proved
His might, nor less his mercy, as behoved—
Death conscious that he only could destroy
The bodily frame. That beauty is laid low
To moulder in a far-off field of Rome;
But Heaven is now, blest Child, thy Spirit's home:
When such divine communion, which we know,
Is felt, thy Roman-burial place will be
Surely a sweet remembrancer of Thee.
1846.

"WHERE LIES THE TRUTH? HAS MAN, IN WISDOM'S CREED"

Where lies the truth? has Man, in wisdom's creed,
A pitiable doom; for respite brief
A care more anxious, or a heavier grief?
Is he ungrateful, and doth little heed
God's bounty, soon forgotten; or indeed,
Must Man, with labour born, awake to sorrow
When Flowers rejoice and Larks with rival speed
Spring from their nests to bid the Sun good morrow?
They mount for rapture as their songs proclaim
Warbled in hearing both of earth and sky;
But o'er the contrast wherefore heave a sigh?
Like those aspirants let us soar—our aim,
Through life's worst trials, whether shocks or snares,
A happier, brighter, purer Heaven than theirs. 1846.

"I KNOW AN AGED MAN CONSTRAINED TO DWELL"

I know an aged Man constrained to dwell
In a large house of public charity,
Where he abides, as in a Prisoner's cell,
With numbers near, alas! no company.

When he could creep about, at will, though poor
And forced to live on alms, this old Man fed
A Redbreast, one that to his cottage door
Came not, but in a lane partook his bread.

There, at the root of one particular tree,
An easy seat this worn-out Labourer found
While Robin pecked the crumbs upon his knee
Laid one by one, or scattered on the ground.

Dear intercourse was theirs, day after day;
What signs of mutual gladness when they met!
Think of their common peace, their simple play,
The parting moment and its fond regret.

Months passed in love that failed not to fulfil,
In spite of season's change, its own demand,
By fluttering pinions here and busy bill;
There by caresses from a tremulous hand.

Thus in the chosen spot a tie so strong
Was formed between the solitary pair,
That when his fate had housed him 'mid a throng
The Captive shunned all converse proffered there.

Wife, children, kindred, they were dead and gone;
But, if no evil hap his wishes crossed,
One living Stay was left, and on that one
Some recompence for all that he had lost.

Oh that the good old Man had power to prove,
By message sent through air or visible token,
That still he loves the Bird, and still must love;
That friendship lasts though fellowship is broken! 1846.

"HOW BEAUTIFUL THE QUEEN OF NIGHT"

How beautiful the Queen of Night, on high
Her way pursuing among scattered clouds,
Where, ever and anon, her head she shrouds
Hidden from view in dense obscurity.
But look, and to the watchful eye
A brightening edge will indicate that soon
We shall behold the struggling Moon
Break forth,—again to walk the clear blue sky. 1846.

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

TO LUCCA GIORDANO

Giordano, verily thy Pencil's skill
Hath here portrayed with Nature's happiest grace
The fair Endymion couched on Latmos-hill;
And Dian gazing on the Shepherd's face
In rapture,—yet suspending her embrace,
As not unconscious with what power the thrill
Of her most timid touch his sleep would chase,
And, with his sleep, that beauty calm and still.
Oh may this work have found its last retreat
Here in a Mountain-bard's secure abode,
One to whom, yet a School-boy, Cynthia showed
A face of love which he in love would greet,
Fixed, by her smile, upon some rocky seat;
Or lured along where greenwood paths he trod.

Rydal Mount, 1846.

"WHO BUT IS PLEASED TO WATCH THE MOON ON HIGH"

Who but is pleased to watch the moon on high
Travelling where she from time to time enshrouds
Her head, and nothing loth her Majesty
Renounces, till among the scattered clouds
One with its kindling edge declares that soon
Will reappear before the uplifted eye
A Form as bright, as beautiful a moon,
To glide in open prospect through clear sky.
Pity that such a promise e'er should prove
False in the issue, that yon seeming space
Of sky should be in truth the stedfast face
Of a cloud flat and dense, through which must move
(By transit not unlike man's frequent doom)
The Wanderer lost in more determined gloom. 1846.

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS

Discourse was deemed Man's noblest attribute,
And written words the glory of his hand;
Then followed Printing with enlarged command
For thought—dominion vast and absolute
For spreading truth, and making love expand.
Now prose and verse sunk into disrepute
Must lacquey a dumb Art that best can suit
The taste of this once-intellectual Land.
A backward movement surely have we here,
From manhood,—back to childhood; for the age—
Back towards caverned life's first rude career.
Avaunt this vile abuse of pictured page!
Must eyes be all in all, the tongue and ear
Nothing? Heaven keep us from a lower stage! 1846.

"THE UNREMITTING VOICE OF NIGHTLY STREAMS"

THE unremitting voice of nightly streams
That wastes so oft, we think, its tuneful powers,
If neither soothing to the worm that gleams
Through dewy grass, nor small birds hushed in bowers,
Nor unto silent leaves and drowsy flowers,—
That voice of unpretending harmony
(For who what is shall measure by what seems
To be, or not to be,
Or tax high Heaven with prodigality?)
Wants not a healing influence that can creep
Into the human breast, and mix with sleep
To regulate the motion of our dreams
For kindly issues—as through every clime
Was felt near murmuring brooks in earliest time;
As at this day, the rudest swains who dwell
Where torrents roar, or hear the tinkling knell
Of water-breaks, with grateful heart could tell.
1846.

SONNET

TO AN OCTOGENARIAN

AFFECTIONS lose their object; Time brings forth
No successors; and, lodged in memory,
If love exist no longer, it must die,—
Wanting accustomed food, must pass from earth,
Or never hope to reach a second birth.
This sad belief, the happiest that is left
To thousands, share not Thou; howe'er bereft,
Scorned, or neglected, fear not such a dearth.
Though poor and destitute of friends thou art,
Perhaps the sole survivor of thy race,
One to whom Heaven assigns that mournful part
The utmost solitude of age to face,
Still shall be left some corner of the heart
Where Love for living Thing can find a place.
1846.

ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY STREAM

BEHOLD an emblem of our human mind
Crowded with thoughts that need a settled home,
Yet, like to eddying balls of foam
Within this whirlpool, they each other chase
Round and round, and neither find
An outlet nor a resting-place!
Stranger, if such disquietude be thine,
Fall on thy knees and sue for help divine.
1846.

ODE ON THE INSTALLATION OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT AS CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, JULY 1847

INTRODUCTION AND CHORUS

FOR thirst of power that Heaven disowns,
For temples, towers, and thrones,
Too long insulted by the Spoiler's shock,
Indignant Europe cast
Her stormy foe at last
To reap the whirlwind on a Libyan rock.

SOLO—(TENOR)

War is passion's basest game
Madly played to win a name;
Up starts some tyrant, Earth and Heaven to dare,
The servile million bow;
But will the lightning glance aside to spare
The Despot's laurelled brow?

CHORUS

War is mercy, glory, fame,
Waged in Freedom's holy cause;
Freedom, such as Man may claim
Under God's restraining laws.
Such is Albion's fame and glory:
Let rescued Europe tell the story.

RECIT. (*accompanied*)—(CONTRALTO)

But lo, what sudden cloud has darkened all
The land as with a funeral pall?
The Rose of England suffers blight,
The flower has drooped, the Isle's delight,
Flower and bud together fall—
A Nation's hopes lie crushed in Claremont's desolate hall.

AIR—(SOPRANO)

Time a chequered mantle wears;—
Earth awakes from wintry sleep;
Again the Tree a blossom bears—
Cease, Britannia, cease to weep!
Hark to the peals on this bright May morn!
They tell that your future Queen is born.

SOPRANO SOLO AND CHORUS

A Guardian Angel fluttered
Above the Babe, unseen;
One word he softly uttered—
It named the future Queen:
And a joyful cry through the Island rang,
As clear and bold as the trumpet's clang,
As bland as the reed of peace—
"VICTORIA be her name!"
For righteous triumphs are the base
Whereon Britannia rests her peaceful fame.

QUARTET

Time, in his mantle's sunniest fold,
Uplifted in his arms the child;
And, while the fearless Infant smiled,
Her happier destiny foretold:—
"Infancy, by Wisdom mild,
Trained to health and artless beauty;
Youth, by pleasure unbeguiled
From the lore of lofty duty;
Womanhood is pure renown,
Seated on her lineal throne:
Leaves of myrtle in her Crown,
Fresh with lustre all their own.
Love, the treasure worth possessing,
More than all the world beside,
This shall be her choicest blessing,
Oft to royal hearts denied."

RECIT. (*accompanied*)—(BASS)

That eve, the Star of Brunswick shone
With stedfast ray benign
On Gotha's ducal roof, and on
The softly flowing Leine;
Nor failed to gild the spires of Bonn,
And glittered on the Rhine—
Old Camus, too, on that prophetic night
Was conscious of the ray;
And his willows whispered in its light,
Not to the Zephyr's sway,
But with a Delphic life, in sight
Of this auspicious day:

CHORUS

This day, when Granta hails her chosen Lord,
And proud of her award,
Confiding in the Star serene,
Welcomes the Consort of a happy Queen.

AIR—(CONTRALTO)

Prince, in these Collegiate bowers,
Where Science, leagued with holier truth,
Guards the sacred heart of youth,
Solemn monitors are ours.
These reverend aisles, these hallowed towers,
Raised by many a hand august,
Are haunted by majestic Powers,
The memories of the Wise and Just,
Who, faithful to a pious trust,
Here, in the Founder's spirit sought
To mould and stamp the ore of thought
In that bold form and impress high
That best betoken patriot loyalty.
Not in vain those Sages taught,—
True disciples, good as great,
Have pondered here their country's weal,
Weighed the Future by the Past,
Learned how social frames may last,
And how a Land may rule its fate
By constancy inviolate,
Though worlds to their foundations reel
The sport of factious Hate or godless Zeal.

AIR—(BASS)

Albert, in thy race we cherish
A Nation's strength that will not perish
While England's sceptred Line
True to the King of Kings is found;
Like that Wise ancestor of thine
Who threw the Saxon shield o'er Luther's life,
When first above the yells of bigot strife
The trumpet of the Living Word
Assumed a voice of deep portentous sound,
From gladdened Elbe to startled Tiber heard.

CHORUS

What shield more sublime
E'er was blazoned or sung?
And the PRINCE whom we greet
From its Hero is sprung.
Resound, resound the strain,
That hails him for our own!
Again, again, and yet again,
For the Church, the State, the Throne!
And that Presence fair and bright,
Ever blest wherever seen,
Who deigns to grace our festal rite,
The pride of the Islands, VICTORIA THE QUEEN.

NOTES

Page 23

'And, hovering, round it often did a raven fly.'

From a short MS. poem read to me when an undergraduate, by my schoolfellow and friend, Charles Farish, long since deceased. The verses were by a brother of his, a man of promising genius, who died young.

Page 34

'The Borderers.'

This Dramatic Piece, as noticed in its title-page, was composed in 1795-96. It lay nearly from that time till within the last two or three months unregarded among my papers, without being mentioned even to my most intimate friends. Having, however, impressions upon my mind which made me unwilling to destroy the MS., I determined to undertake the responsibility of publishing it during my own life, rather than impose upon my successors the task of deciding its fate. Accordingly it has been revised with some care; but, as it was at first written, and is now published, without any view to its exhibition upon the stage, not the slightest alteration has been made in the conduct of the story, or the composition of the characters; above all, in respect to the two leading Persons of the Drama, I felt no inducement to make any change. The study of human nature suggests this awful truth, that as in the trials to which life subjects us, sin and crime are apt to start from their very opposite qualities, so are there no limits to the hardening of the heart and the perversion of the understanding to which they may carry their slaves. During my long residence in France, while the Revolution was rapidly advancing to its extreme of wickedness, I had frequent opportunities of being an eye-witness of this process, and it was while that knowledge was fresh upon my memory that the Tragedy of "The Borderers" was composed.

Page 179

'Jones! as from Calais southward.'

(See Dedication to Descriptive Sketches.)

This excellent Person, one of my earliest and dearest friends, died in the year 1835. We were undergraduates together of the same year, at the same college; and companions in many a delightful ramble through his own romantic Country of North Wales. Much of the latter part of his life he passed in comparative solitude, which I know was often cheered by remembrance of our youthful adventures, and of the beautiful regions which, at home and abroad, we had visited together. Our long friendship was never subject to a moment's interruption,—and, while revising these volumes for the last time, I have been so often reminded of my loss, with a not unpleasing sadness, that I trust the Reader will excuse this passing mention of a Man who well deserves from me something more than so brief a notice. Let me only add, that during the middle part of his life he resided many years (as Incumbent of the Living) at a Parsonage in Oxfordshire, which is the subject of the sonnet entitled "A Parsonage in Oxfordshire," p. 607.

Page 180

In this and a succeeding Sonnet on the same subject, let me be understood as a Poet availing himself of the situation which the King of Sweden occupied, and of the principles AVOWED IN HIS MANIFESTOS; as laying hold of these advantages for the purpose of embodying moral truths. This remark might, perhaps, as well have been suppressed; for to those who may be in sympathy with the course of these Poems, it will be superfluous, and will, I fear, be thrown away upon that other class, whose besotted admiration of the intoxicated despot hereafter placed in contrast with him, is the most melancholy evidence of degradation in British feeling and intellect which the times have furnished.

Page 184

'*To the Daisy.*'

This Poem, and two others to the same Flower, were written in the year 1802; which is mentioned, because in some of the ideas, though not in the manner in which those ideas are connected, and likewise even in some of the expressions, there is a resemblance to passages in a Poem (lately published) of Mr. Montgomery's, entitled, a Field Flower. This being said, Mr. Montgomery will not think any apology due to him; I cannot, however, help addressing him in the words of the Father of English Poets.

> "Though it happe me to rehersin—
> That ye han in your freshe songis saied,
> Forberith me, and beth not ill apaied,
> Sith that ye se I doe it in the honour
> Of Love, and eke in service of the Flour."

1807.

Page 190

The following is extracted from the journal of my fellow-traveller, to which, as persons acquainted with my poems will know, I have been obliged on other occasions:—

"Dumfries, August 1803.

"On our way to the churchyard where Burns is buried, we were accompanied by a bookseller, who showed us the outside of Burns's house, where he had lived the last three years of his life, and where he died. It has a mean appearance, and is in a bye situation; the front whitewashed; dirty about the doors, as most Scotch houses are; flowering plants in the window. Went to visit his grave; he lies in a corner of the churchyard, and his second son, Francis Wallace, beside him. There is no stone to mark the spot; but a hundred guineas have been collected to be expended upon some sort of monument. 'There,' said the bookseller, pointing to a pompous monument, 'lies Mr.'—(I have forgotten the name)—'a remarkably clever man; he was an attorney, and scarcely ever lost a cause he undertook. Burns made many a lampoon upon him, and there they rest as you see.' We looked at Burns's grave with melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own poet's epitaph:—

> 'Is there a man,' etc.

"The churchyard is full of grave-stones and expensive monuments, in all sorts of fantastic shapes, obelisk-wise, pillar-wise, etc. When our guide had left us we turned again to Burns's grave, and afterwards went to his house, wishing to inquire after Mrs. Burns, who was gone to spend some time by the seashore with her children. We spoke to the maid-servant at the door, who invited us forward, and we sate down in the parlour. The walls were coloured with a blue wash; on one side of the fire was a mahogany desk; opposite the window a clock, which Burns mentions, in one of his letters, having received as a present. The house was cleanly and neat in the inside, the stairs of stone scoured white, the kitchen on the right side of the passage, the parlour on the left. In the room above the parlour the poet died, and his son, very lately, in the same room. The servant told us she had lived four years with Mrs. Burns, who was now in great sorrow for the death of Wallace. She said that Mrs. B.'s youngest son was now at Christ's Hospital. We were glad to leave Dumfries, where we could think of little but poor Burns, and his moving about on that unpoetic ground. In our road to Brownhill, the next stage, we passed Ellisland, at a little distance on our right—his farm-house. Our pleasure in looking round would have been still greater, if the road had led us nearer the spot.

* * * * *

"I cannot take leave of this country

which we passed through to-day, without mentioning that we saw the Cumberland mountains within half-a-mile of Ellisland, Burns's house, the last view we had of them. Drayton has prettily described the connection which this neighbourhood has with ours, when he makes Skiddaw say,—

> 'Scruffel, from the sky
> That Annandale doth crown, with a most amorous eye
> Salutes me every day, or at my pride looks grim,
> Oft threatening me with clouds, as I oft threaten him.'

"These lines came to my brother's memory, as well as the Cumberland saying,—

> 'If Skiddaw hath a cap
> Scruffel wots well of that.'

"We talked of Burns, and of the prospect he must have had, perhaps from his own door, of Skiddaw and his companions; indulging ourselves in the fancy that we might have been personally known to each other, and he have looked upon those objects with more pleasure for our sakes."

Page 202

'*The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale.*'

With this picture, which was taken from real life, compare the imaginative one of "The Reverie of Poor Susan," p. 72; and see (to make up the deficiencies of this class) "The Excursion," *passim.*

Page 208

'*The Seven Sisters.*'

The Story of this Poem is from the German of FREDERICA BRUN.

Page 219

'*Moss Campion* (*Silene acaulis*).'

This most beautiful plant is scarce in England, though it is found in great abundance upon the mountains of Scotland. The first specimen I ever saw of it, in its native bed, was singularly fine, the tuft or cushion being at least eight inches in diameter, and the root proportionably thick. I have only met with it in two places among our mountains, in both of which I have since sought for it in vain.

Botanists will not, I hope, take it ill, if I caution them against carrying off, inconsiderately, rare and beautiful plants. This has often been done, particularly from Ingleborough and other mountains in Yorkshire, till the species have totally disappeared, to the great regret of lovers of nature living near the places where they grew.

Page 225

'*The Waggoner.*'

Several years after the event that forms the subject of the Poem, in company with my friend, the late Mr. Coleridge, I happened to fall in with the person to whom the name of Benjamin is given. Upon our expressing regret that we had not, for a long time, seen upon the road either him or his waggon, he said, "They could not do without me; and as to the man who was put in my place, no good could come out of him; he was a man of no *ideas.*"

The fact of my discarded hero's getting the horses out of a great difficulty with a word, as related in the poem, was told me by an eye-witness.

Page 225

'*The buzzing dor-hawk, round and round, is wheeling,—*'

When the Poem was first written the note of the bird was thus described:—

> "The Night-hawk is singing his frog-like tune,
> Twirling his watchman's rattle about—"

but from unwillingness to startle the reader at the outset by so bold a mode of expression, the passage was altered as it now stands.

Page 230

After the line, "*Can any mortal clog come to her,*" followed in the MS. an incident which has been kept back. Part of the suppressed verses shall here be given as a gratification of private feeling, which the well-disposed reader will find no difficulty in excusing. They are now printed for the first time.

"Can any mortal clog come to her?
It can: * * * *
* * * * * *

But Benjamin, in his vexation,
Possesses inward consolation;
He knows his ground, and hopes to find
A spot with all things to his mind,
An upright mural block of stone,
Moist with pure water trickling down.
A slender spring; but kind to man
It is, a true Samaritan;
Close to the highway, pouring out
Its offering from a chink or spout;
Whence all, howe'er athirst, or drooping
With toil, may drink, and without stooping.
Cries Benjamin, 'Where is it, where?
Voice it hath none, but must be near.'
—A star, declining towards the west,
Upon the watery surface threw
Its image tremulously imprest,
That just marked out the object and withdrew:
Right welcome service! * * *

* * * * * *

Rock of Names!

Light is the strain, but not unjust
To Thee, and thy memorial-trust
That once seemed only to express
Love that was love in idleness;
Tokens, as year hath followed year
How changed, alas, in character!
For they were graven on thy smooth breast
By hands of those my soul loved best;
Meek women, men as true and brave
As ever went to a hopeful grave:
Their hands and mine, when side by side
With kindred zeal and mutual pride,
We worked until the Initials took
Shapes that defied a scornful look.—
Long as for us a genial feeling
Survives, or one in need of healing,
The power, dear Rock, around thee cast,
Thy monumental power, shall last
For me and mine! O thought of pain,
That would impair it or profane!
Take all in kindness then, as said
With a staid heart but playful head;
And fail not Thou, loved Rock! to keep
Thy charge when we are laid asleep."

Page 344

'Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st The human Soul,' etc.

"Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic Soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come."
Shakspeare's Sonnets.

Page 346

'The Horn of Egremont Castle.'

This story is a Cumberland tradition. I have heard it also related of the Hall of Hutton John, an ancient residence of the Hudlestons, in a sequestered valley upon the river Dacor.

Page 357

'Danger which they fear, and honour which they understand not.'

Words in Lord Brooke's Life of Sir P. Sidney.

Page 361

Mrs. Wordsworth has a strong impression that "The Mother's Return" was written at Coleorton, where Miss Wordsworth was then staying with the children, during the absence of the former.

Page 363

'Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.'

Henry Lord Clifford, etc., who is the subject of this Poem, was the son of John Lord Clifford, who was slain at Towton Field, which John Lord Clifford, as is known to the reader of English History, was the person who after the battle of Wakefield slew, in the pursuit, the young Earl of Rutland, son of the Duke of York, who had fallen in the battle, "in part of revenge" (say the Authors of the History of Cumberland and Westmoreland); "for the Earl's Father had slain his." A deed which worthily blemished the author (saith Speed); but who, as he adds, "dare promise any thing temperate of himself in the heat of martial fury? chiefly, when it was resolved not to leave any branch of the York line standing; for so one maketh this Lord to speak." This, no doubt, I would observe by the bye, was an action sufficiently in the vindictive spirit of the times, and yet not altogether so bad as represented; "for the Earl was no child, as some writers would have him, but able to bear arms, being sixteen or seventeen years of age, as is evident from this (say the Memoirs of the Countess of Pembroke, who was laudably anxious to wipe away, as far as could be, this stigma from the illustrious name to which she was born), that he was the next Child to King Edward the Fourth, which his mother had by Richard Duke of York, and that King was then eighteen years of age: and for the small distance betwixt her children, see Austin Vincent, in his Book of Nobility, p. 622, where he writes of them all." It may further be observed, that Lord Clifford, who was then himself only twenty-five years of age, had been a leading man and commander two or three years together in the army of Lancaster, before this time; and, therefore, would be less likely to think that the Earl of Rutland might be entitled to mercy from his youth.—But, independent of this act, at best a cruel and savage one, the Family of Clifford had done enough to draw upon them the vehement hatred of the House of York: so that after the Battle of Towton there was no hope for them but in flight and concealment. Henry, the subject of the Poem, was deprived of his estate and honours during the space of twenty-four years; all which time he lived as a shepherd in Yorkshire, or in Cumberland, where the estate of his Father-in-law (Sir Lancelot Threlkeld) lay. He was restored to his estate and honours in the first year of Henry the Seventh. It is recorded that, "when called to Parliament, he behaved nobly and wisely; but otherwise came seldom to London or the Court; and rather delighted to live in the country, where he repaired several of his Castles, which had gone to decay during the late troubles." Thus far is chiefly collected from Nicholson and Burn; and I can add, from my own knowledge, that there is a tradition current in the village of Threlkeld and its neighbourhood, his principal retreat, that in the course of his shepherd-life he had acquired great astronomical knowledge. I cannot conclude this note without adding a word upon the subject of those numerous and noble feudal Edifices, spoken of in the Poem, the ruins of some of which are, at this day, so great an ornament to that interesting country. The Cliffords had always been distinguished for an honourable pride in these Castles; and we have seen that, after the wars of York and Lancaster, they were rebuilt; in the civil wars of Charles the First they were again laid waste, and again restored almost to their former magnificence by the celebrated Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Pembroke, etc. Not more than twenty-five years after this was done, when the estates of Clifford had passed into the Family of Tufton, three of these Castles, namely, Brough, Brougham, and Pendragon, were demolished, and the timber and other materials sold by Thomas Earl of Thanet. We will hope that, when this order was issued, the Earl had not consulted the text of Isaiah, 58th chap. 12th verse, to which the inscription placed over the gate of Pendragon Castle by the Countess of Pembroke (I believe his Grandmother), at the time she repaired that structure, refers the reader:—"*And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.*" The Earl of Thanet, the present possessor of the Estates, with a due respect for the memory of his ancestors, and a proper sense of the value and beauty of these remains of antiquity, has (I am told) given orders that they shall be preserved from all depredations.

Page 364

'*Earth helped him with the cry of blood.*'

This line is from "The Battle of Bosworth Field," by Sir John Beaumont (brother to the Dramatist), whose poems are written with much spirit, elegance, and harmony, and have deservedly been reprinted lately in Chalmers's Collection of English Poets.

Page 365

'*And both the undying fish that swim*
Through Bowscale-tarn,' etc.

It is imagined by the people of the country that there are two immortal Fish, inhabitants of this Tarn, which lies in the mountains not far from Threlkeld.—Blencathara, mentioned before, is the old and proper name of the mountain vulgarly called Saddleback.

Page 365

'Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls.'

The martial character of the Cliffords is well known to the readers of English history; but it may not be improper here to say, by way of comment on these lines and what follows, that besides several others who perished in the same manner, the four immediate Progenitors of the Person in whose hearing this is supposed to be spoken all died in the Field.

Page 365

'The White Doe of Rylstone.'

The Poem of the White Doe of Rylstone is founded on a local tradition, and on the Ballad in Percy's Collection, entitled "The Rising of the North." The tradition is as follows:—"About this time," not long after the Dissolution, "a White Doe," say the aged people of the neighbourhood, "long continued to make a weekly pilgrimage from Rylstone over the fells of Bolton, and was constantly found in the Abbey Churchyard during divine service; after the close of which she returned home as regularly as the rest of the congregation."—DR. WHITAKER'S *History of the Deanery of Craven.*—Rylstone was the property and residence of the Nortons, distinguished in that ill-advised and unfortunate Insurrection; which led me to connect with this tradition the principal circumstances of their fate, as recorded in the Ballad.

"Bolton Priory," says Dr. Whitaker in his excellent book, The History and Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven, "stands upon a beautiful curvature of the Wharf, on a level sufficiently elevated to protect it from inundations, and low enough for every purpose of picturesque effect.

"Opposite to the East window of the Priory Church, the river washes the foot of a rock nearly perpendicular, and of the richest purple, where several of the mineral beds, which break out instead of maintaining their usual inclination to the horizon, are twisted by some inconceivable process into undulating and spiral lines. To the South all is soft and delicious; the eye reposes upon a few rich pastures, a moderate reach of the river, sufficiently tranquil to form a mirror to the sun, and the bounding hills beyond, neither too near nor too lofty to exclude, even in winter, any portion of his rays.

"But after all, the glories of Bolton are on the North. Whatever the most fastidious taste could require to constitute a perfect landscape, is not only found here, but in its proper place. In front, and immediately under the eye, is a smooth expanse of park-like enclosure, spotted with native elm, ash, etc. of the finest growth: on the right a skirting oak wood, with jutting points of grey rock; on the left a rising copse. Still forward are seen the aged groves of Bolton Park, the growth of centuries; and farther yet, the barren and rocky distances of Simon-seat and Barden Fell contrasted with the warmth, fertility, and luxuriant foliage of the valley below.

"About half a mile above Bolton the valley closes, and either side of the Wharf is overhung by solemn woods, from which huge perpendicular masses of grey rock jut out at intervals.

"This sequestered scene was almost inaccessible till of late, that ridings have been cut on both sides of the river, and the most interesting points laid open by judicious thinnings in the woods. Here a tributary stream rushes from a waterfall, and bursts through a woody glen to mingle its waters with the Wharf: there the Wharf itself is nearly lost in a deep cleft in the rock, and next becomes a horned flood enclosing a woody island—sometimes it reposes for a moment, and then resumes its native character, lively, irregular, and impetuous.

"The cleft mentioned above is the tremendous STRID. This chasm, being incapable of receiving the winter floods, has formed on either side a broad strand of naked gritstone full of rock-basins, or 'pots of the Linn,' which bear witness to the restless impetuosity of so many Northern torrents. But, if here Wharf is lost to the eye, it amply repays another sense by its deep and solemn roar, like 'the Voice of the angry Spirit of the Waters,' heard far above and beneath, amidst the silence of the surrounding woods.

"The terminating object of the landscape is the remains of Barden Tower, interesting from their form and situation, and still more so from the recollections which they excite."

Page 367

'*Action is transitory—*'

This and the five lines that follow were either read or recited by me, more than thirty years since, to the late Mr. Hazlitt, who quoted some expressions in them (imperfectly remembered) in a work of his published several years ago.

Page 367

'*From Bolton's old monastic tower.*'

It is to be regretted that at the present day Bolton Abbey wants this ornament: but the Poem, according to the imagination of the Poet, is composed in Queen Elizabeth's time. "Formerly," says Dr. Whitaker, "over the Transept was a tower. This is proved not only from the mention of bells at the Dissolution, when they could have had no other place, but from the pointed roof of the choir, which must have terminated westward, in some building of superior height to the ridge."

Page 367

'*A Chapel, like a wild-bird's nest.*'

"The Nave of the Church having been reserved at the Dissolution for the use of the Saxon Cure, is still a parochial Chapel; and, at this day, is as well kept as the neatest English Cathedral."

Page 367

'*Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak!*'

"At a small distance from the great gateway stood the Prior's Oak, which was felled about the year 1720, and sold for 70*l.* According to the price of wood at that time, it could scarcely have contained less than 1400 feet of timber."

Page 369

'*When Lady Aäliza mourned.*'

The detail of this tradition may be found in Dr. Whitaker's book, and in a Poem of this Collection, "The Force of Prayer."

Page 369

'*Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door.*'

"At the East end of the North aisle of Bolton Priory Church, is a chantry belonging to Bethmesly Hall, and a vault where, according to tradition, the Claphams" (who inherited this estate, by the female line, from the Mauleverers) "were interred upright." John de Clapham, of whom this ferocious act is recorded, was a man of great note in his time: "he was a vehement partisan of the house of Lancaster, in whom the spirit of his chieftains, the Cliffords, seemed to survive."

Page 370

'*Who loved the Shepherd-lord to meet.*'

Among these Poems will be found one entitled, "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, upon the Restoration of Lord Clifford, the Shepherd, to the Estates and Honours of his Ancestors." To that Poem is annexed an account of this personage, chiefly extracted from Burn and Nicholson's History of Cumberland and Westmoreland. It gives me pleasure to add these further particulars concerning him, from Dr. Whitaker, who says he "retired to the solitude of Barden, where he seems to have enlarged the tower out of a common keeper's lodge, and where he found a retreat equally favourable to taste, to instruction, and to devotion. The narrow limits of his residence show that he had learned to despise the pomp of greatness, and that a small train of servants could suffice him, who had lived to the age of thirty a servant himself. I think this nobleman resided here almost entirely when in Yorkshire, for all his charters which I have seen are dated at Barden.

"His early habits, and the want of those artificial measures of time which even shepherds now possess, had given him a turn for observing the motions of the heavenly bodies; and, having purchased such an apparatus as could then be procured, he amused and informed himself by those pursuits, with the aid of the Canons of Bolton, some of whom are said to have been well versed in what was then known of the science.

"I suspect this nobleman to have been sometimes occupied in a more visionary pursuit, and probably in the same company.

"For, from the family evidences, I have met with two MSS. on the subject of Alchemy, which, from the character, spelling, etc., may almost certainly be referred to the reign of Henry the Seventh. If these were originally deposited with the MSS. of the Cliffords, it might have been for the use of this nobleman. If they were brought from Bolton at the Dissolution, they must have been the work of those Canons whom he almost exclusively conversed with.

"In these peaceful employments Lord Clifford spent the whole reign of Henry the Seventh, and the first years of his son. But in the year 1513, when almost sixty years old, he was appointed to a principal command over the army which fought at Flodden, and showed that the military genius of the family had neither been chilled in him by age, nor extinguished by habits of peace.

"He survived the battle of Flodden ten years, and died April 23d, 1523, aged about 70. I shall endeavour to appropriate to him a tomb, vault, and chantry, in the choir of the church of Bolton, as I should be sorry to believe that he was deposited, when dead, at a distance from the place which in his lifetime he loved so well.

"By his last will he appointed his body to be interred at Shap, if he died in Westmoreland; or at Bolton, if he died in Yorkshire."

With respect to the Canons of Bolton, Dr. Whitaker shows from MSS. that not only alchemy but astronomy was a favourite pursuit with them.

Page 373

'*Now joy for you who from the towers*
Of Brancepeth look in doubt and fear.'

Brancepeth Castle stands near the river Were, a few miles from the city of Durham. It formerly belonged to the Nevilles, Earls of Westmoreland. See Dr. Percy's account.

Page 375

'*Of mitred Thurston—what a Host*
He conquered!'

See the Historians for the account of this memorable battle, usually denominated the Battle of the Standard.

Page 375

'*In that other day of Neville's Cross.*'

'In the night before the battle of Durham was strucken and begun, the 17th day of October, *anno* 1346, there did appear to John Fosser, then Prior of the abbey of Durham, a Vision, commanding him to take the holy Corporax-cloth, wherewith St. Cuthbert did cover the chalice when he used to say mass, and to put the same holy relique like to a banner-cloth upon the point of a spear, and the next morning to go and repair to a place on the west side of the city of Durham, called the Red Hills, where the Maid's Bower wont to be, and there to remain and abide till the end of the battle. To which vision the Prior obeying, and taking the same for a revelation of God's grace and mercy by the mediation of Holy St. Cuthbert, did accordingly the next morning, with the monks of the said abbey, repair to the said Red Hills, and there most devoutly humbling and prostrating themselves in prayer for the victory in the said battle: (a great multitude of the Scots running and pressing by them, with intention to have spoiled them, yet had no power to commit any violence under such holy persons, so occupied in prayer, being protected and defended by the mighty Providence of Almighty God, and by the mediation of Holy St. Cuthbert, and the presence of the holy relique). And, after many conflicts and warlike exploits there had and done between the English men and the King of Scots and his company, the said battle ended, and the victory was obtained, to the great overthrow and confusion of the Scots, their enemies: And then the said Prior and monks accompanied with Ralph Lord Nevil, and John Nevil his son, and the Lord Percy, and many other nobles of England, returned home and went to the abbey church, there joining in hearty prayer and thanksgiving to God and Holy St. Cuthbert for the victory achieved that day."

This battle was afterwards called the Battle of Néville's Cross from the following circumstance:—

"On the west side of the city of Durham, where two roads pass each other, a most notable, famous, and goodly cross of stone-work was erected and set up to the honour of God for the victory there obtained in the field of battle, and known by the name of Nevil's Cross, and built at the sole cost of the Lord Ralph Nevil, one of the most excellent and chief persons in the said battle." The Relique of St. Cuthbert afterwards became of great importance in military events. For soon after this battle, says the same author, "The Prior caused a goodly and sumptuous banner to be made," (which is then described at great length) "and in the midst of the same banner-cloth was the said holy relique and corporax-cloth enclosed, etc., and so sumptuously finished, and absolutely perfected, this banner was dedicated to Holy St. Cuthbert, of intent and purpose that for the future it should be carried to any battle, as occasion should serve; and was never carried and showed at any battle but by the especial grace of God Almighty, and the mediation of Holy St. Cuthbert, it brought home victory; which banner-cloth, after the dissolution of the abbey, fell into the possession of Dean WHITTINGHAM, whose wife, called KATHARINE, being a French woman (as is most credibly reported by eye-witnesses), did most injuriously burn the same in her fire, to the open contempt and disgrace of all ancient and goodly reliques."—Extracted from a book entitled "Durham Cathedral, as it stood before the Dissolution of the Monastery." It appears, from the old metrical History, that the above-mentioned banner was carried by the Earl of Surrey to Flodden Field.

Page 378

'*An edifice of warlike frame*
Stands single—Norton Tower its name—'

It is so called to this day, and is thus described by Dr. Whitaker:—"Rylstone Fell yet exhibits a monument of the old warfare between the Nortons and Cliffords. On a point of very high ground, commanding an immense prospect, and protected by two deep ravines, are the remains of a square tower, expressly said by Dodsworth to have been built by Richard Norton. The walls are of strong grout-work, about four feet thick. It seems to have been three stories high. Breaches have been industriously made in all the sides, almost to the ground, to render it untenable.

"But Norton Tower was probably a sort of pleasure-house in summer, as there are, adjoining to it, several large mounds (two of them are pretty entire), of which no other account can be given than that they were butts for large companies of archers.

"The place is savagely wild, and admirably adapted to the uses of a watch tower.'

Page 382

———'*despoil and desolation*
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown.'

"After the attainder of Richard Norton, his estates were forfeited to the crown, where they remained till the 2d or 3d of James; they were then granted to Francis Earl of Cumberland." From an accurate survey made at that time, several particulars have been extracted by Dr. W. It appears that "the mansion-house was then in decay. Immediately adjoining is a close, called the Vivery, so called, undoubtedly, from the French Vivier, or modern Latin Vivarium; for there are near the house large remains of a pleasure-ground, such as were introduced in the earlier part of Elizabeth's time, with topiary works, fish-ponds, an island, etc. The whole township was ranged by an hundred and thirty red deer, the property of the Lord, which, together with the wood, had, after the attainder of Mr. Norton, been committed to Sir Stephen Tempest. The wood, it seems, had been abandoned to depredations, before which time it appears that the neighbourhood must have exhibited a forest-like and sylvan scene. In this survey, among the old tenants is mentioned one Richard Kitchen, butler to Mr. Norton, who rose in rebellion with his master, and was executed at Ripon.

Page 384

'In the deep fork of Amerdale.'

"At the extremity of the parish of Burnsal, the valley of Wharf forks off into two great branches, one of which retains the name of Wharfdale, to the source of the river; the other is usually called Littondale, but more anciently and properly, Amerdale. Dernbrook, which runs along an obscure valley from the N.W., is derived from a Teutonic word, signifying concealment." — DR. WHITAKER.

Page 384

'When the bells of Rylstone played
Their Sabbath music—" God us ayde!"'

On one of the bells of Rylstone church, which seems coeval with the building of the tower, is this cypher, "I. N." for John Norton, and the motto, "God us ayde."

Page 385

'The grassy rock-encircled Pound.'

Which is thus described by Dr. Whitaker:—"On the plain summit of the hill are the foundations of a strong wall stretching from the S.W. to the N.E. corner of the tower, and to the edge of a very deep glen. From this glen, a ditch, several hundred yards long, runs south to another deep and rugged ravine. On the N. and W., where the banks are very steep, no wall or mound is discoverable, paling being the only fence that could stand on such ground.

"From the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, it appears that such pounds for deer, sheep, etc., were far from being uncommon in the south of Scotland. The principle of them was something like that of a wire mouse-trap. On the declivity of a steep hill, the bottom and sides of which were fenced so as to be impassable, a wall was constructed nearly level with the surface on the outside, yet so high within, that without wings it was impossible to escape in the opposite direction. Care was probably taken that these enclosures should contain better feed than the neighbouring parks or forests; and whoever is acquainted with the habits of these sequacious animals, will easily conceive, that if the leader was once tempted to descend into the snare, a herd would follow."

I cannot conclude without recommending to the notice of all lovers of beautiful scenery Bolton Abbey and its neighbourhood. This enchanting spot belongs to the Duke of Devonshire; and the superintendence of it has for some years been entrusted to the Rev. William Carr, who has most skilfully opened out its features; and, in whatever he has added, has done justice to the place, by working with an invisible hand of art in the very spirit of nature.

Page 389

'Zaragoza.'

In this Sonnet I am under some obligations to one of an Italian author, to which I cannot refer.

Page 420

'——much did he see of men.'

At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature; under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste. It may still, however, be satisfactory to have prose testimony how far a Character, employed for purposes of imagination, is founded upon general fact. I, therefore, subjoin an extract from an author who had opportunities of being well acquainted with a class of men, from whom my own personal knowledge emboldened me to draw this portrait.

"We learn from Cæsar and other Roman Writers, that the travelling merchants who frequented Gaul and other barbarous countries, either newly conquered by the Roman arms, or bordering on the Roman conquests, were ever the first to make the inhabitants of those countries familiarly acquainted with the Roman modes of life, and to inspire them with an inclination to follow the Roman fashions, and to enjoy Roman conveniences. In North America, travelling merchants from the Settlements have done and continue to do much more towards civilising the Indian natives, than all the missionaries, papist or protestant, who have ever been sent among them.

"It is farther to be observed, for the credit of this most useful class of men, that they commonly contribute, by their personal manners, no less than by the sale of their wares, to the refinement of the people among whom they travel. Their dealings form them to great quickness of wit and acuteness of judgment. Having constant occasion to recommend themselves and their goods, they acquire habits of the most obliging attention, and the most insinuating address. As in their peregrinations they have opportunity of contemplating the manners of various men and various cities, they become eminently skilled in the knowledge of the world. *As they wander, each alone, through thinly-inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection and of sublime contemplation.* With all these qualifications, no wonder that they should often be, in remote parts of the country, the best mirrors of fashion, and censors of manners; and should contribute much to polish the roughness and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. It is not more than twenty or thirty years since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England, of purpose to *carry the pack*, was considered as going to lead the life and acquire the fortune of a gentleman. When, after twenty years' absence in that honourable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all intents and purposes."

Heron's Journey in Scotland, vol. i. p. 89.

Page 441

'*Lost in unsearchable eternity!*'

Since this paragraph was composed, I have read with so much pleasure, in Burnet's Theory of the Earth, a passage expressing corresponding sentiments, excited by objects of a similar nature, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it.

"Siquod verò Natura nobis dedit spectaculum, in hâc tellure, verè gratum, et philosopho dignum, id semel mihi contigisse arbitror; cùm ex celsissimâ rupe speculabundus ad oram maris Mediterranei, hinc æquor cæruleum, illinc tractus Alpinos prospexi; nihil quidem magis dispar aut dissimile, nec in suo genere, magis egregium et singulare. Hoc theatrum ego facilè prætulerim Romanis cunctis, Græcisve; atque id quod natura hîc spectandum exhibet, scenicis ludis omnibus, aut amphitheatri certaminibus. Nihil hîc elegans aut venustum, sed ingens et magnificum, et quod placet magnitudine suâ et quâdam specie immensitatis. Hinc intuebar maris æquabilem superficiem, usque et usque diffusam, quantum maximùm oculorum acies ferri potuit; illinc disruptissimam terræ faciem, et vastas moles variè elevatas aut depressas, erectas, propendentes, reclinatas, coacervatas, omni situ inæquali et turbido. Placuit, ex hâc parte, Naturæ unitas et simplicitas, et inexhausta quædam planities; ex alterâ, multiformis confusio magnorum corporum et insanæ rerum strages: quas cùm intuebar, non urbis alicujus aut oppidi, sed confracti mundi rudera, ante oculos habere mihi visus sum.

In singulis ferè montibus erat aliquid insolens et mirabile, sed præ cæteris mihi placebat illa, quâ sedebam, rupes; erat maxima et altissima, et quâ terram respiciebat, molliori ascensu altitudinem suam dissimulabat: quà verò mare, horrendúm præceps, et quasi ad perpendiculum facta, instar parietis. Prætereà facies illa marina adeò erat lævis ac uniformis (quod in rupibus aliquando observare licet) ac si scissa fuisset à summo ad imum, in illo plano; vel terræ motu aliquo, aut fulmine, divulsa.

Ima pars rupis erat cava, recessusque habuit, et saxeos specus, euntes in vacuum montem; sive naturâ pridem factos, sive exesos mari, et undarum crebris ictibus: In hos enim cum impetu ruebant et fragore, æstuantis maris fluctus; quos iterum spumantes reddidit antrum, et quasi ab imo ventre evomuit.

Dextrum latus montis erat præruptum, aspero saxo et nudâ caute: sinistrum non adeò neglexerat Natura, arboribus utpote ornatum: et prope pedem montis rivus limpidæ aquæ prorupit; qui cùm vicinam vallem irrigaverat, lento motu serpens, et per varios mæandros, quasi ad protrahendam vitam, in magno mari absorptus subito periit. Denique in summo vertice promontorii, commodè eminebat saxum, cui insidebam contemplabundus. Vale augusta sedes. Rege digna: Augusta rupes, semper mihi memoranda!" P. 89. *Telluris Theoria sacra, etc., Editio secunda.*

Page 451

'*Of Mississippi, or that northern stream.*'

"A man is supposed to improve by going out into the *World*, by visiting *London.* Artificial man does; he extends with his sphere; but, alas! that sphere is microscopic; it is formed of minutiæ, and he surrenders his genuine vision to the artist, in order to embrace it in his ken. His bodily senses grow acute, even to barren and inhuman pruriency; while his mental become proportionally obtuse. The reverse is the Man of Mind: he who is placed in the sphere of Nature and of God, might be a mock at Tattersall's and Brooks's, and a sneer at St. James's: he would certainly be swallowed alive by the first *Pizarro* that crossed him:—But when he walks along the river of Amazons; when he rests his eye on the unrivalled Andes; when he measures the long and watered savannah; or contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant, vast Pacific—and feels himself a freeman in this vast theatre, and commanding each ready produced fruit of this wilderness, and each progeny of this stream—his exultation is not less than imperial. He is as gentle, too, as he is great: his emotions of tenderness keep pace with his elevation of sentiment; for he says, 'These were made by a good Being, who, unsought by me, placed me here to enjoy them.' He becomes at once a child and a king. His mind is in himself; from hence he argues, and from hence he acts, and he argues unerringly, and acts magisterially: his mind in himself is also in his God; and therefore he loves, and therefore he soars."—From the notes upon *The Hurricane*, a Poem, *by William Gilbert.*

The Reader, I am sure, will thank me for the above quotation, which, though from a strange book, is one of the finest passages of modern English prose.

Page 454

'*'Tis, by comparison, an easy task*
Earth to despise,' etc.

See, upon this subject, Baxter's most interesting review of his own opinions and sentiments in the decline of life. It may be found (lately reprinted) in Dr. Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Biography.*

Page 455

'*Alas! the endowment of immortal Power*
Is matched unequally with custom, time,' etc.

This subject is treated at length in the Ode—Intimations of Immortality, page 357.

Page 456

'*Knowing the heart of man is set to be,' etc.*

The passage quoted from Daniel is taken from a poem addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and the two last lines, printed in Italics, are by him translated from Seneca. The whole Poem is very beautiful. I will transcribe four stanzas from it, as they contain an admirable picture of the state of a wise Man's mind in a time of public commotion.

Nor is he moved with all the thunder-cracks
Of tyrant's threats, or with the surly brow
Of Power, that proudly sits on others' crimes;
Charged with more crying sins than those he checks.
The storms of sad confusion that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appal not him; that hath no side at all,
But of himself, and knows the worst can fall.

Although his heart (so near allied to earth)
Cannot but pity the perplexed state
Of troublous and distressed mortality,
That thus make way unto the ugly birth
Of their own sorrows, and do still beget
Affliction upon Imbecility:
Yet seeing thus the course of things must run,
He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-done.

And whilst distraught ambition compasses,
And is encompassed, while as craft deceives,
And is deceived: whilst man doth ransack man,
And builds on blood, and rises by distress;
And th' Inheritance of desolation leaves
To great-expecting hopes: He looks thereon,
As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,
And bears no venture in Impiety.

Thus, Lady, fares that man that hath prepared
A rest for his desires; and sees all things
Beneath him; and hath learned this book of man,
Full of the notes of frailty; and compared

The best of glory with her sufferings:
By whom, I see, you labour all you can
To plant your heart! and set your thoughts as near
His glorious mansion as your powers can bear.

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'*Or rather, as we stand on holy earth,*
And have the dead around us.'

Leo. You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?
Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might; . . . . . .
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
See the Brothers.

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'*And suffering Nature grieved that one should die.*'
Southey's Retrospect.

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'*And whence that tribute? wherefore these regards?*'

The sentiments and opinions here uttered are in unison with those expressed in the following Essay upon Epitaphs, which was furnished by me for Mr. Coleridge's periodical work, *The Friend;* and as they are dictated by a spirit congenial to that which pervades this and the two succeeding books, the sympathising reader will not be displeased to see the Essay here annexed.

ESSAY UPON EPITAPHS

It needs scarcely be said, that an Epitaph presupposes a Monument, upon which it is to be engraven. Almost all Nations have wished that certain external signs should point out the places where their dead are interred. Among savage tribes unacquainted with letters this has mostly been done either by rude stones placed near the graves, or by mounds of earth raised over them. This custom proceeded obviously from a twofold desire: first to guard the remains of the deceased from irreverent approach or from savage violation: and secondly to preserve their memory. "Never any," says Camden, "neglected burial but some savage nations; as the Bactrians, which cast their dead to the dogs; some varlet philosophers, as Diogenes, who desired to be devoured of fishes; some dissolute courtiers, as Mæcenas, who was wont to say, Non tumulum curo; sepelit natura relictos.

'I'm careless of a grave:—Nature her dead will save.'"

As soon as nations had learned the use of letters, epitaphs were inscribed upon these monuments; in order that their intention might be more surely and adequately fulfilled. I have derived monuments and epitaphs from two sources of feeling, but these do in fact resolve themselves into one. The invention of epitaphs, Weever, in his Discourse of Funeral Monuments, says rightly, "proceeded from the presage or fore-feeling of immortality, implanted in all men naturally, and is referred to the scholars of Linus the Theban poet, who flourished about the year of the world two thousand seven hundred; who first bewailed this Linus their Master, when he was slain, in doleful verses, then called of him Œlina, afterwards Epitaphia, for that they were first sung at burials, after engraved upon the sepulchres."

And, verily, without the consciousness of a principle of immortality in the human soul, Man could never have had awakened in him the desire to live in the remembrance of his fellows: mere love, or the yearning of kind towards kind, could not have produced it. The dog or horse perishes in the field, or in the stall, by the side of his companions, and is incapable of anticipating the sorrow with which his surrounding associates shall bemoan his death, or pine for his loss; he cannot pre-conceive this regret, he can form no thought of it; and therefore cannot possibly have a desire to leave such regret or remembrance behind him. Add to the principle of love which exists in the inferior animals, the faculty of reason which exists in Man alone; will the conjunction of these account for the desire? Doubtless it is a necessary consequence of

this conjunction; yet not, I think, as a direct result, but only to be come at through an intermediate thought, viz. that of an intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable. At least the precedence, in order of birth, of one feeling to the other, is unquestionable. If we look back upon the days of childhood, we shall find that the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own individual Being, the mind was without this assurance; whereas, the wish to be remembered by our friends or kindred after death, or even in absence, is, as we shall discover, a sensation that does not form itself till the *social* feelings have been developed, and the Reason has connected itself with a wide range of objects. Forlorn, and cut off from communication with the best part of his nature, must that man be, who should derive the sense of immortality, as it exists in the mind of a child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal spirits with which the lamb in the meadow or any other irrational creature is endowed; who should ascribe it, in short, to blank ignorance in the child; to an inability arising from the imperfect state of his faculties to come, in any point of his being, into contact with a notion of death; or to an unreflecting acquiescence in what has been instilled into him! Has such an unfolder of the mysteries of nature, though he may have forgotten his former self, ever noticed the early, obstinate, and unappeasable inquisitiveness of children upon the subject of origination? This single fact proves outwardly the monstrousness of those suppositions: for, if we had no direct external testimony that the minds of very young children meditate feelingly upon death and immortality, these inquiries, which we all know they are perpetually making concerning the *whence*, do necessarily include correspondent habits of interrogation concerning the *whither*. Origin and tendency are notions inseparably co-relative. Never did a child stand by the side of a running stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelled to follow this question by another: "Towards what abyss is it in progress? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx?" And th
spirit of the answer must have been, thoug
the word might be sea or ocean, accompanie
perhaps with an image gathered from a map
or from the real object in nature—thes
might have been the *letter*, but the *spirit* c
the answer must have been *as* inevitably,–
a receptacle without bounds or dimensions
—nothing less than infinity. We may
then, be justified in asserting, that the sens
of immortality, if not a co-existent and twi
birth with Reason, is among the earliest c
her offspring: and we may further asser
that from these conjoined, and under the
countenance, the human affections ar
gradually formed and opened out. This i
not the place to enter into the recesses c
these investigations; but the subject require
me here to make a plain avowal, that, fo
my own part, it is to me inconceivable, tha
the sympathies of love towards each othe
which grow with our growth, could eve
attain any new strength, or even preserv
the old, after we had received from th
outward senses the impression of death, an
were in the habit of having that impressic
daily renewed and its accompanying feelin
brought home to ourselves, and to those w
love; if the same were not counteracted b
those communications with our intern
Being, which are anterior to all the
experiences, and with which revelatic
coincides, and has through that coinciden
alone (for otherwise it could not possess i
a power to affect us. I confess, with n
the conviction is absolute that, if th
impression and sense of death were n
thus counterbalanced, such a hollowne
would pervade the whole system of thing
such a want of correspondence and consis
ency, a disproportion so astounding betwi
means and ends, that there could be n
repose, no joy. Were we to grow u
unfostered by this genial warmth, a fro
would chill the spirit, so penetrating an
powerful that there could be no motions
the life of love; and infinitely less could w
have any wish to be remembered after w
had passed away from a world in whic
each man had moved about like a shadow.–
If, then, in a creature endowed with t
faculties of foresight and reason, the soci
affections could not have unfolded then
selves uncountenanced by the faith th

Man is an immortal being, and if, consequently, neither could the individual dying have had a desire to survive in the remembrance of his fellows, nor on their side could they have felt a wish to preserve for future times vestiges of the departed; it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in immortality, wherein these several desires originate, neither monuments nor epitaphs, in affectionate or laudatory commemoration of the deceased, could have existed in the world.

Simonides, it is related, upon landing in a strange country, found the corse of an unknown person lying by the seaside; he buried it, and was honoured throughout Greece for the piety of that act. Another ancient Philosopher, chancing to fix his eyes upon a dead body, regarded the same with slight, if not with contempt, saying, "See the shell of the flown bird!" But it is not to be supposed that the moral and tender-hearted Simonides was incapable of the lofty movements of thought to which that other Sage gave way at the moment while his soul was intent only upon the indestructible being; nor, on the other hand, that he, in whose sight a lifeless human body was of no more value than the worthless shell from which the living fowl had departed, would not, in a different mood of mind, have been affected by those earthly considerations which had incited the philosophic Poet to the performance of that pious duty. And with regard to this latter we may be assured that, if he had been destitute of the capability of communing with the more exalted thoughts that appertain to human nature, he would have cared no more for the corse of the stranger than for the dead body of a seal or porpoise which might have been cast up by the waves. We respect the corporeal frame of Man, not merely because it is the habitation of a rational, but of an immortal Soul. Each of these Sages was in sympathy with the best feelings of our nature; feelings which, though they seem opposite to each other, have another and a finer connection than that of contrast.—It is a connection formed through the subtle progress by which, both in the natural and the moral world, qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other. As, in sailing upon the orb of this planet, a voyage towards the regions where the sun sets conducts gradually to the quarter where we have been accustomed to behold it come forth at its rising; and, in like manner, a voyage towards the east, the birth-place in our imagination of the morning, leads finally to the quarter where the sun is last seen when he departs from our eyes; so the contemplative Soul, travelling in the direction of mortality, advances to the country of everlasting life; and, in like manner, may she continue to explore those cheerful tracts till she is brought back, for her advantage and benefit, to the land of transitory things—of sorrow and of tears.

On a midway point, therefore, which commands the thoughts and feelings of the two Sages whom we have represented in contrast, does the Author of that species of composition, the laws of which it is our present purpose to explain, take his stand. Accordingly, recurring to the twofold desire of guarding the remains of the deceased and preserving their memory, it may be said that a sepulchral monument is a tribute to a man as a human being; and that an epitaph (in the ordinary meaning attached to the word) includes this general feeling and something more; and is a record to preserve the memory of the dead, as a tribute due to his individual worth, for a satisfaction to the sorrowing hearts of the survivors, and for the common benefit of the living: which record is to be accomplished, not in a general manner, but, where it can, in *close connection with the bodily remains of the deceased:* and these, it may be added, among the modern nations of Europe, are deposited within, or contiguous to, their places of worship. In ancient times, as is well known, it was the custom to bury the dead beyond the walls of towns and cities; and among the Greeks and Romans they were frequently interred by the waysides.

I could here pause with pleasure, and invite the Reader to indulge with me in contemplation of the advantages which must have attended such a practice. We might ruminate upon the beauty which the monuments, thus placed, must have borrowed from the surrounding images of nature—from the trees, the wild flowers, from a stream running perhaps within sight or hearing, from the beaten road stretching its weary length hard by. Many tender similitudes must these objects have presented to the mind of the traveller leaning upon one of the tombs, or reposing in the coolness of its shade, whether he had halted from weariness or in compliance with the invitation, "Pause, Traveller!" so often found upon the monuments. And to its epitaph also must have been supplied strong appeals to visible appearances or immediate impressions, lively and affecting analogies of life as a journey—death as a sleep overcoming the tired wayfarer—of misfortune as a storm that falls suddenly upon him—of beauty as a flower that passeth away, or of innocent pleasure as one that may be gathered—of virtue that standeth firm as a rock against the beating waves—of hope "undermined insensibly like the poplar by the side of the river that has fed it," or blasted in a moment like a pine-tree by the stroke of lightning upon the mountain-top—of admonitions and heart-stirring remembrances, like a refreshing breeze that comes without warning, or the taste of the waters of an unexpected fountain. These and similar suggestions must have given, formerly, to the language of the senseless stone a voice enforced and endeared by the benignity of that nature with which it was in unison.—We, in modern times, have lost much of these advantages; and they are but in a small degree counterbalanced to the inhabitants of large towns and cities by the custom of depositing the dead within, or contiguous to, their places of worship; however splendid or imposing may be the appearance of those edifices, or however interesting or salutary the recollections associated with them. Even were it not true that tombs lose their monitory virtue when thus obtruded upon the notice of men occupied with the cares of the world, and too often sullied and defiled by those cares, yet still, when death is in our thoughts, nothing can make amends for the want of the soothing influences of nature, and for the absence of those types of renovation and decay which the fields and woods offer to the notice of the serious and contemplative mind. To feel the force of this sentiment, let a man only compare in imagination the unsightly manner in which ou monuments are crowded together in th busy, noisy, unclean, and almost grassle churchyard of a large town, with the sti seclusion of a Turkish cemetery, in som remote place, and yet further sanctified b the grove of cypress in which it is em bosomed. Thoughts in the same temp as these have already been expressed wit true sensibility by an ingenuous Poet of th present day. The subject of his poem "All Saints Church, Derby:" he has bee deploring the forbidding and unseem appearance of its burial-ground, and utte ing a wish that in past times the practic had been adopted of interring the inhabi ants of large towns in the country;—

Then in some rural, calm, sequestered spot
Where healing Nature her benignant look
Ne'er changes, save at that lorn season, when,
With tresses drooping o'er her sable stole,
She yearly mourns the mortal doom of man,
Her noblest work, (so Israel's virgins erst,
With annual moan upon the mountains wept
Their fairest gone,) there in that rural scene,
So placid, so congenial to the wish
The Christian feels, of peaceful rest within
The silent grave, I would have stayed:

* * * * *

—wandered forth, where the cold dew of heave
Lay on the humbler graves around, what time
The pale moon gazed upon the turfy mounds,
Pensive, as though like me, in lonely muse,
'Twere brooding on the dead inhumed beneath
There while with him, the holy man of Uz,
O'er human destiny I sympathised,
Counting the long, long periods prophecy
Decrees to roll, ere the great day arrives
Of resurrection, oft the blue-eyed Spring
Had met me with her blossoms, as the Dove,
Of old, returned with olive leaf, to cheer
The Patriarch mourning o'er a world destroyec
And I would bless her visit; for to me
'Tis sweet to trace the consonance that links
As one, the works of Nature and the word
Of God.—— JOHN EDWARDS.

A village churchyard, lying as it do in the lap of nature, may indeed be mo favourably contrasted with that of a tov of crowded population; and sepultu therein combines many of the best ten encies which belong to the mode practis by the Ancients with others peculiar itself. The sensations of pious cheerfu ness, which attend the celebration of t sabbath-day in rural places, are profitably chastised by the sight of the graves of kindred and friends, gathered together in that general home towards which the thoughtful yet happy spectators themselves are journeying. Hence a parish church, in the stillness of the country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead; a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.

As, then, both in cities and in villages, the dead are deposited in close connection with our places of worship, with us the composition of an epitaph naturally turns, still more than among the nations of antiquity, upon the most serious and solemn affections of the human mind; upon departed worth—upon personal or social sorrow and admiration—upon religion, individual and social—upon time, and upon eternity. Accordingly, it suffices, in ordinary cases, to secure a composition of this kind from censure, that it contain nothing that shall shock or be inconsistent with this spirit. But, to entitle an epitaph to praise, more than this is necessary. It ought to contain some thought or feeling belonging to the mortal or immortal part of our nature touchingly expressed; and if that be done, however general or even trite the sentiment may be, every man of pure mind will read the words with pleasure and gratitude. A husband bewails a wife; a parent breathes a sigh of disappointed hope over a lost child; a son utters a sentiment of filial reverence for a departed father or mother; a friend perhaps inscribes an encomium recording the companionable qualities, or the solid virtues, of the tenant of the grave, whose departure has left a sadness upon his memory. This and a pious admonition to the living, and a humble expression of Christian confidence in immortality, is the language of a thousand churchyards; and it does not often happen that anything, in a greater degree discriminate or appropriate to the dead or to the living, is to be found in them. This want of discrimination has been ascribed by Dr. Johnson, in his Essay upon the epitaphs of Pope, to two causes: first, the scantiness of the objects of human praise; and, secondly, the want of variety in the characters of men; or, to use his own words, "to the fact, that the greater part of mankind have no character at all." Such language may be holden without blame among the generalities of common conversation; but does not become a critic and a moralist speaking seriously upon a serious subject. The objects of admiration in human nature are not scanty, but abundant: and every man has a character of his own to the eye that has skill to perceive it. The real cause of the acknowledged want of discrimination in sepulchral memorials is this: That to analyse the characters of others, especially of those whom we love, is not a common or natural employment of men at any time. We are not anxious unerringly to understand the constitution of the minds of those who have soothed, who have cheered, who have supported us; with whom we have been long and daily pleased or delighted. The affections are their own justification. The light of love in our hearts is a satisfactory evidence that there is a body of worth in the minds of our friends or kindred, whence that light has proceeded. We shrink from the thought of placing their merits and defects to be weighed against each other in the nice balance of pure intellect; nor do we find much temptation to detect the shades by which a good quality or virtue is discriminated in them from an excellence known by the same general name as it exists in the mind of another; and least of all do we incline to these refinements when under the pressure of sorrow, admiration, or regret, or when actuated by any of those feelings which incite men to prolong the memory of their friends and kindred by records placed in the bosom of the all-uniting and equalising receptacle of the dead.

The first requisite, then, in an Epitaph is, that it should speak, in a tone which shall sink into the heart, the general language of humanity as connected with the subject of death—the source from which an epitaph proceeds—of death, and of life. To be born and to die are the two points in which all men feel themselves to be in absolute coincidence. This general language may be uttered so strikingly as to entitle an epitaph to high praise; yet it cannot lay claim to the highest unless other excellences be superadded. Passing through all intermediate steps, we will attempt to determine at once what these excellences are, and wherein consists the perfection of this species of composition.—It will be found to lie in a due proportion of the common or universal feeling of humanity to sensations excited by a distinct and clear conception, conveyed to the reader's mind, of the individual whose death is deplored and whose memory is to be preserved; at least of his character as, after death, it appeared to those who loved him and lament his loss. The general sympathy ought to be quickened, provoked, and diversified, by particular thoughts, actions, images,—circumstances of age, occupation, manner of life, prosperity which the deceased had known, or adversity to which he had been subject; and these ought to be bound together and solemnised into one harmony by the general sympathy. The two powers should temper, restrain, and exalt each other. The reader ought to know who and what the man was whom he is called upon to think of with interest. A distinct conception should be given (implicitly where it can, rather than explicitly) of the individual lamented.—But the writer of an epitaph is not an anatomist, who dissects the internal frame of the mind; he is not even a painter, who executes a portrait at leisure and in entire tranquillity: his delineation, we must remember, is performed by the side of the grave; and, what is more, the grave of one whom he loves and admires. What purity and brightness is that virtue clothed in, the image of which must no longer bless our living eyes! The character of a deceased friend or beloved kinsman is not seen—no, nor ought to be seen—otherwise than as a tree through a tender haze or a luminous mist, that spiritualises and beautifies it; that takes away, indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely; may impress and affect the more. Shall we say, then, that this is not truth, not a faithful image; and that, accordingly, the purposes of commemoration cannot be answered?—It *is* truth, and of the highest order; for, though doubtless things are not apparent which did exist; yet, the object being looked at through thi medium, parts and proportions are brough into distinct view which before had bee only imperfectly or unconsciously seen: i is truth hallowed by love—the joint offspring of the worth of the dead and th affections of the living! This may easil be brought to the test. Let one, whos eyes have been sharpened by persona hostility to discover what was amiss in th character of a good man, hear the tiding of his death, and what a change is wrough in a moment! Enmity melts away; and as it disappears, unsightliness, disproportion, and deformity, vanish; and, throug the influence of commiseration, a harmon of love and beauty succeeds. Bring suc a man to the tombstone on which shall b inscribed an epitaph on his adversary composed in the spirit which we hav recommended. Would he turn from it a from an idle tale? No;—the thoughtfu look, the sigh, and perhaps the involuntar tear, would testify that it had a sane, generous, and good meaning; and that o the writer's mind had remained an impression which was a true abstract of the character of the deceased; that his gifts an graces were remembered in the simplicit in which they ought to be remembered The composition and quality of the min of a virtuous man, contemplated by the sid of the grave where his body is mouldering ought to appear, and be felt as somethin midway between what he was on eart walking about with his living frailties, an what he may be presumed to be as a Spir in heaven.

It suffices, therefore, that the trunk an the main branches of the worth of th deceased be boldly and unaffectedly represented. Any further detail, minutely an scrupulously pursued, especially if this b done with laborious and antithetic discriminations, must inevitably frustrate i own purpose; forcing the passing Spectato to this conclusion,—either that the dea did not possess the merits ascribed to him or that they who have raised a monumen to his memory, and must therefore b supposed to have been closely connecte with him, were incapable of perceivin those merits; or at least during the act composition had lost sight of them; fo the understanding having been so busy in its petty occupation, how could the heart of the mourner be other than cold? and in either of these cases, whether the fault be on the part of the buried person or the survivors, the memorial is unaffecting and profitless.

Much better is it to fall short in discrimination than to pursue it too far, or to labour it unfeelingly. For in no place are we so much disposed to dwell upon those points of nature and condition wherein all men resemble each other, as in the temple where the universal Father is worshipped, or by the side of the grave which gathers all human Beings to itself, and "equalises the lofty and the low." We suffer and we weep with the same heart; we love and are anxious for one another in one spirit; our hopes look to the same quarter; and the virtues by which we are all to be furthered and supported, as patience, meekness, good-will, justice, temperance, and temperate desires, are in an equal degree the concern of us all. Let an Epitaph, then, contain at least these acknowledgments to our common nature; nor let the sense of their importance be sacrificed to a balance of opposite qualities or minute distinctions in individual character; which if they do not (as will for the most part be the case), when examined, resolve themselves into a trick of words, will, even when they are true and just, for the most part be grievously out of place; for, as it is probable that few only have explored these intricacies of human nature, so can the tracing of them be interesting only to a few. But an epitaph is not a proud writing shut up for the studious: it is exposed to all—to the wise and the most ignorant; it is condescending, perspicuous, and lovingly solicits regard; its story and admonitions are brief, that the thoughtless, the busy, and indolent, may not be deterred, nor the impatient tired: the stooping old man cons the engraven record like a second horn-book;—the child is proud that he can read it;—and the stranger is introduced through its mediation to the company of a friend: it is concerning all, and for all:—in the churchyard it is open to the day; the sun looks down upon the stone, and the rains of heaven beat against it.

Yet, though the writer who would excite sympathy is bound in this case, more than in any other, to give proof that he himself has been moved, it is to be remembered that to raise a monument is a sober and a reflective act; that the inscription which it bears is intended to be permanent, and for universal perusal; and that, for this reason, the thoughts and feelings expressed should be permanent also—liberated from that weakness and anguish of sorrow which is in nature transitory, and which with instinctive decency retires from notice. The passions should be subdued, the emotions controlled; strong, indeed, but nothing ungovernable or wholly involuntary. Seemliness requires this, and truth requires it also: for how can the narrator otherwise be trusted? Moreover, a grave is a tranquillising object: resignation in course of time springs up from it as naturally as the wild flowers, besprinkling the turf with which it may be covered, or gathering round the monument by which it is defended. The very form and substance of the monument which has received the inscription, and the appearance of the letters, testifying with what a slow and laborious hand they must have been engraven, might seem to reproach the author who had given way upon this occasion to transports of mind, or to quick turns of conflicting passion; though the same might constitute the life and beauty of a funeral oration or elegiac poem.

These sensations and judgments, acted upon perhaps unconsciously, have been one of the main causes why epitaphs so often personate the deceased, and represent him as speaking from his own tomb-stone. The departed Mortal is introduced telling you himself that his pains are gone; that a state of rest is come; and he conjures you to weep for him no longer. He admonishes with the voice of one experienced in the vanity of those affections which are confined to earthly objects, and gives a verdict like a superior Being, performing the office of a judge, who has no temptations to mislead him, and whose decision cannot but be dispassionate. Thus is death disarmed of its sting, and affliction unsubstantialised. By this tender fiction, the survivors bind themselves to a sedater sorrow, and employ the intervention of the imagination in order that the reason may speak her own language earlier than she would otherwise have been enabled to do. This shadowy interposition also harmoniously unites the two worlds of the living and the dead by their appropriate affections. And it may be observed that here we have an additional proof of the propriety with which sepulchral inscriptions were referred to the consciousness of immortality as their primal source.

I do not speak with a wish to recommend that an epitaph should be cast in this mould preferably to the still more common one, in which what is said comes from the survivors directly; but rather to point out how natural those feelings are which have induced men, in all states and ranks of society, so frequently to adopt this mode. And this I have done chiefly in order that the laws which ought to govern the composition of the other may be better understood. This latter mode, namely, that in which the survivors speak in their own persons, seems to me upon the whole greatly preferable, as it admits a wider range of notices; and, above all, because, excluding the fiction which is the groundwork of the other, it rests upon a more solid basis.

Enough has been said to convey our notion of a perfect epitaph; but it must be borne in mind that one is meant which will best answer the *general* ends of that species of composition. According to the course pointed out, the worth of private life, through all varieties of situation and character, will be most honourably and profitably preserved in memory. Nor would the model recommended less suit public men in all instances, save of those persons who by the greatness of their services in the employments of peace or war, or by the surpassing excellence of their works in art, literature, or science, have made themselves not only universally known, but have filled the heart of their country with everlasting gratitude. Yet I must here pause to correct myself. In describing the general tenor of thought which epitaphs ought to hold, I have omitted to say, that if it be the *actions* of a man, or even some *one* conspicuous or beneficial act of local or general utility, which have distinguished him, and excited a desire that he should be remembered, then, of course, ought th attention to be directed chiefly to thos actions or that act: and such sentiment dwelt upon as naturally arise out of then or it. Having made this necessary distinction, I proceed.—The mighty benefactors of mankind, as they are not onl known by the immediate survivors, but wi continue to be known familiarly to lates posterity, do not stand in need of biographi sketches in such a place; nor of delineations of character to individualise them This is already done by their Works, in th memories of men. Their naked names and a grand comprehensive sentiment c civic gratitude, patriotic love, or huma admiration—or the utterance of some elementary principle most essential in th constitution of true virtue—or a declaratio touching that pious humility and self-abasement, which are ever most profound a minds are most susceptible of genuine exaltation—or an intuition, communicated i adequate words, of the sublimity of intellectual power;—these are the only tribut which can here be paid—the only offerin that upon such an altar would not b unworthy.

"What needs my Shakspeare for his honoure
bones
The labour of an age in piled stones,
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of th
name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument,
And so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die."

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'And spires whose "silent finger points t heaven."'

An instinctive taste teaches men to bui their churches in flat countries with spir steeples, which, as they cannot be referre to any other object, point as with sile finger to the sky and stars, and sometime when they reflect the brazen light of a ric though rainy sunset, appear like a pyram of flame burning heavenward. See "T Friend," by S. T. Coleridge, No. 14, 223.

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'*That sycamore, which annually holds*
Within its shade, as in a stately tent.'

"This Sycamore oft musical with Bees;
Such Tents the Patriarchs loved."
S. T. Coleridge.

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'*Perish the roses and the flowers of kings.*'

The "Transit gloria mundi" is finely expressed in the Introduction to the Foundation-charters of some of the ancient Abbeys. Some expressions here used are taken from that of the Abbey of St. Mary's, Furness, the translation of which is as follows:—

"Considering every day the uncertainty of life, that the roses and flowers of Kings, Emperors, and Dukes, and the crowns and palms of all the great, wither and decay; and that all things, with an uninterrupted course, tend to dissolution and death: I therefore,'' etc.

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——— '*Earth has lent*
Her waters, Air her breezes.'

In treating this subject, it was impossible not to recollect with gratitude the pleasing picture which, in his Poem of the Fleece, the excellent and amiable Dyer has given of the influences of manufacturing industry upon the face of this Island. He wrote at a time when machinery was first beginning to be introduced, and his benevolent heart prompted him to augur from it nothing but good. Truth has compelled me to dwell upon the baneful effects arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves.

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'*Binding herself by statute.*'

The discovery of Dr. Bell affords marvellous facilities for carrying this into effect; and it is impossible to overrate the benefit which might accrue to humanity from the universal application of this simple engine under an enlightened and conscientious government.

Page 532

'*Dion.*'

This poem began with the following stanza, which has been displaced on account of its detaining the reader too long from the subject, and as rather precluding, than preparing for, the due effect of the allusion to the genius of Plato:—

Fair is the Swan, whose majesty, prevailing
O'er breezeless water, on Locarno's lake,
Bears him on while proudly sailing
He leaves behind a moon-illumined wake:
Behold! the mantling spirit of reserve
Fashions his neck into a goodly curve;
An arch thrown back between luxuriant wings
Of whitest garniture, like fir-tree boughs
To which, on some unruffled morning, clings
A flaky weight of winter's purest snows!
—Behold!—as with a gushing impulse heaves
That downy prow, and softly cleaves
The mirror of the crystal flood,
Vanish inverted hill, and shadowy wood,
And pendent rocks, where'er, in gliding state,
Winds the mute Creature without visible Mate
Or Rival, save the Queen of night
Showering down a silver light,
From heaven, upon her chosen Favourite!

Page 546

'*Thanksgiving Ode.*'

Wholly unworthy of touching upon the momentous subject here treated would that Poet be, before whose eyes the present distresses under which this kingdom labours could interpose a veil sufficiently thick to hide, or even to obscure, the splendour of this great moral triumph. If I have given way to exultation, unchecked by these distresses, it might be sufficient to protect me from a charge of insensibility, should I state my own belief that the sufferings will be transitory. Upon the wisdom of a very large majority of the British nation rested that generosity which poured out the treasures of this country for the deliverance of Europe: and in the same national wisdom, presiding in time of peace over an energy not inferior to that which has been displayed in war, *they* confide, who encourage a firm hope that the cup of our wealth will be gradually replenished. There will, doubtless, be no few ready to indulge in regrets and repinings; and to feed a morbid satisfaction, by aggravating these burthens in imagination; in order that calamity so confidently prophesied, as it has not taken the shape which their sagacity allotted to it, may appear as grievous as possible under another. But the body of the nation will not quarrel with the gain, because it might have been purchased at a less price; and, acknowledging in these sufferings, which they feel to have been in a great degree unavoidable, a consecration of their noble efforts, they will vigorously apply themselves to remedy the evil.

Nor is it at the expense of rational patriotism, or in disregard of sound philosophy, that I have given vent to feelings tending to encourage a martial spirit in the bosoms of my countrymen, at a time when there is a general outcry against the prevalence of these dispositions. The British army, both by its skill and valour in the field, and by the discipline which rendered it, to the inhabitants of the several countries where its operations were carried on, a protection from the violence of their own troops, has performed services that will not allow the language of gratitude and admiration to be suppressed or restrained (whatever be the temper of the public mind) through a scrupulous dread lest the tribute due to the past should prove an injurious incentive for the future. Every man deserving the name of Briton adds his voice to the chorus which extols the exploits of his countrymen, with a consciousness, at times overpowering the effort, that they transcend all praise.—But this particular sentiment, thus irresistibly excited, is not sufficient. The nation would err grievously if she suffered the abuse which other states have made of military power to prevent her from perceiving that no people ever was or can be independent, free, or secure, much less great, in any sane application of the word, without a cultivation of military virtues. Nor let it be overlooked that the benefits derivable from these sources are placed within the reach of Great Britain, under conditions peculiarly favourable. The same insular position which, by rendering territorial incorporation impossible, utterly precludes the desire of conquest under the most seductive shape it can assume, enables her to rely, for her defence against foreign foes, chiefly upon a species of armed force from which her own liberties have nothing to fear. Such are the privileges of her situation; and, by permitting, they invite her to give way to the courageous instincts of human nature, and to strengthen and refine them by culture.

But some have more than insinuated that a design exists to subvert the civil character of the English people by unconstitutional applications and unnecessary increase of military power. The advisers and abettors of such a design, were it possible that it should exist, would be guilty of the most heinous crime, which, upon this planet, can be committed. Trusting that this apprehension arises from the delusive influences of an honourable jealousy, let me hope that the martial qualities which I venerate will be fostered by adhering to those good old usages which experience has sanctioned, and by availing ourselves of new means of indisputable promise: particularly by applying, in its utmost possible extent, that system of tuition whose master-spring is a habit of gradually enlightened subordination;—by imparting knowledge, civil, moral, and religious, in such measure that the mind, among all classes of the community, may love, admire, and be prepared and accomplished to defend, that country under whose protection its faculties have been unfolded and its riches acquired;—by just dealing towards all orders of the state, so that, no members of it being trampled upon, courage may everywhere continue to rest immoveably upon its ancient English foundation, personal self-respect;—by adequate rewards and permanent honours conferred upon the deserving;—by encouraging athletic exercises and manly sports among the peasantry of the country;—and by especial care to provide and support institutions in which, during a time of peace, a reasonable proportion of the youth of the country may be instructed in military science.

I have only to add that I should feel little satisfaction in giving to the world these limited attempts to celebrate the virtues of my country, if I did not encourage a hope that a subject, which it has fallen within my province to treat only in the mass, will by other poets be illustrated in that detail which its importance calls for, and which will allow opportunities to give the merited applause to PERSONS as well as to THINGS.

The ode was published along with other pieces, now interspersed through this volume.

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"Discipline the rule whereof is passion."
LORD BROOKE.

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The event is thus recorded in the journals of the day:—"When the Austrians took Hockheim, in one part of the engagement they got to the brow of the hill, whence they had their first view of the Rhine. They instantly halted—not a gun was fired—not a voice heard: they stood gazing on the river with those feelings which the events of the last fifteen years at once called up. Prince Schwartzenberg rode up to know the cause of this sudden stop; they then gave three cheers, rushed after the enemy, and drove them into the water."

Page 572

'*Wings at my shoulders seem to play.*'

In these lines I am under obligation to the exquisite picture of "Jacob's Dream," by Mr. Alstone, now in America. It is pleasant to make this public acknowledgment to a man of genius, whom I have the honour to rank among my friends.

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If in this Sonnet I should seem to have borne a little too hard upon the personal appearance of the worthy Poissards of Calais, let me take shelter under the authority of my lamented friend, the late Sir George Beaumont. He, a most accurate observer, used to say of them, that their features and countenances seemed to have conformed to those of the creatures they dealt in; at all events the resemblance was striking.

Page 581

'*Brugès.*'

This is not the first poetical tribute which in our times has been paid to this beautiful city. Mr. Southey, in the "Poet's Pilgrimage," speaks of it in lines which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of connecting with my own.

"Time hath not wronged her, nor hath ruin sought
  Rudely her splendid structures to destroy,
Save in those recent days, with evil fraught,
  When mutability, in drunken joy
Triumphant, and from all restraint released,
Let loose her fierce and many-headed beast.

But for the scars in that unhappy rage
  Inflicted, firm she stands and undecayed;
Like our first Sires, a beautiful old age
  Is hers in venerable years arrayed;
And yet, to her, benignant stars may bring,
What fate denies to man,—a second spring.

When I may read of tilts in days of old,
  And tourneys graced by Chieftains of renown,
Fair dames, grave citizens, and warriors bold,
  If fancy would pourtray some stately town,
Which for such pomp fit theatre should be,
Fair Brugès, I shall then remember thee."

In this city are many vestiges of the splendour of the Burgundian Dukedom, and the long black mantle universally worn by the females is probably a remnant of the old Spanish connection, which, if I do not much deceive myself, is traceable in the grave deportment of its inhabitants. Brugès is comparatively little disturbed by that curious contest, or rather conflict, of Flemish with French propensities in matters of taste, so conspicuous through other parts of Flanders. The hotel to which we drove at Ghent furnished an odd instance. In the passages were paintings and statues, after the antique, of Hebe and Apollo; and in the garden a little pond, about a yard and a half in diameter, with a weeping willow bending over it, and under the shade of that tree, in the centre of the pond, a wooden painted statue of a Dutch or Flemish boor, looking ineffably tender upon his mistress, and embracing her. A living duck, tethered at the feet of the sculptured lovers, alternately tormented a miserable eel and itself with endeavours to escape from its bonds and prison. Had we chanced to espy the hostess of the hotel in this quaint rural retreat, the exhibition would have been complete. She was a true Flemish figure, in the dress of the days of Holbein; her symbol of office, a weighty bunch of keys, pendent from her portly waist. In Brussels the modern taste in costume, architecture, etc., has got the mastery; in Ghent there is a struggle: but in Bruges old images are still paramount, and an air of monastic life among the quiet goings-on of a thinly-peopled city is inexpressibly soothing; a pensive grace seems to be cast over all, even the very children.—*Extract from Journal.*

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' *Where unremitting frosts the rocky crescent bleach.*'

"Let a wall of rocks be imagined from three to six hundred feet in height, and rising between France and Spain, so as physically to separate the two kingdoms—let us fancy this wall curved like a crescent, with its convexity towards France. Lastly, let us suppose, that in the very middle of the wall, a breach of 300 feet wide has been beaten down by the famous *Roland*, and we may have a good idea of what the mountaineers call the 'BRECHE DE ROLAND.'"—*Raymond's Pyrenees.*

Page 583

'*Miserere Domine.*'

See the beautiful Song in Mr. Coleridge's Tragedy, "THE REMORSE." Why is the harp of Quantock silent?

Page 583

'*Not, like his great Compeers, indignantly*
Doth Danube spring to life!'

Before this quarter of the Black Forest was inhabited, the source of the Danube might have suggested some of those sublime images which Armstrong has so finely described; at present, the contrast is most striking. The Spring appears in a capacious stone Basin in front of a Ducal palace, with a pleasure-ground opposite; then, passing under the pavement, takes the form of a little, clear, bright, black, vigorous rill, barely wide enough to tempt the agility of a child five years old to leap over it,—and entering the garden, it joins, after a course of a few hundred yards, a stream much more considerable than itself. The *copiousness* of the spring at *Doneschingen* must have procured for it the honour of being named the Source of the Danube.

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"The Staub-bach" is a narrow Stream, which, after a long course on the heights, comes to the sharp edge of a somewhat overhanging precipice, overleaps it with a bound, and, after a fall of 930 feet, forms again a rivulet. The vocal powers of these musical Beggars may seem to be exaggerated; but this wild and savage air was utterly unlike any sounds I had ever heard; the notes reached me from a distance, and on what occasion they were sung I could not guess, only they seemed to belong, in some way or other, to the Waterfall—and reminded me of religious services chanted to Streams and Fountains in Pagan times. Mr. Southey has thus accurately characterised the peculiarity of this music: "While we were at the Waterfall, some half-score peasants, chiefly women and girls, assembled just out of reach of the Spring, and set up—surely, the wildest chorus that ever was heard by human ears,—a song not of articulate sounds, but in which the voice was used as a mere instrument of music, more flexible than any which art could produce,—sweet, powerful, and thrilling beyond description."—See Notes to "A Tale of Paraguay."

Page 585

'*Engelberg.*'

The Convent whose site was pointed out, according to tradition, in this manner, is seated at its base. The architecture of the building is unimpressive, but the situation is worthy of the honour which the imagination of the mountaineers has conferred upon it.

Page 589

'*Though searching damps and many an*
envious flaw
Have marred this Work.'

This picture of the Last Supper has not only been grievously injured by time, but the greatest part of it, if not the whole, is said to have been retouched, or painted over again. These niceties may be left to connoisseurs.—I speak of it as I felt. The copy exhibited in London some years ago, and the engraving by Merghen, are both admirable; but in the original is a power which neither of those works has attained, or even approached.

Page 590

'*Of Figures human and divine.*

The statues ranged round the spire and along the roof of the Cathedral of Milan have been found fault with by persons whose exclusive taste is unfortunate for themselves. It is true that the same expense and labour, judiciously directed to purposes more strictly architectural, might have much heightened the general effect of the building; for, seen from the ground, the Statues appear diminutive. But the *coup-d'œil*, from the best point of view, which is half way up the spire, must strike an unprejudiced person with admiration; and surely the selection and arrangement of the Figures is exquisitely fitted to support the religion of the country in the imaginations and feelings of the spectator. It was with great pleasure that I saw, during the two ascents which we made, several children, of different ages, tripping up and down the slender spire, and pausing to look around them, with feelings much more animated than could have been derived from these or the finest works of art, if placed within easy reach.—Remember also that you have the Alps on one side, and on the other the Apennines, with the plain of Lombardy between!

Page 593

'*Still, with those white-robed Shapes—a*
living Stream,
The glacier Pillars join in solemn guise.'

This Procession is a part of the sacramental service performed once a month. In the valley of Engelberg we had the good fortune to be present at the *Grand Festival* of the Virgin—but the Procession on that day, though consisting of upwards of 1000 persons, assembled from all the branches of the sequestered valley, was much less striking (notwithstanding the sublimity of the surrounding scenery): it wanted both the simplicity of the other and the accompaniment of the Glacier-columns, whose sisterly resemblance to the *moving* Figures gave it a most beautiful and solemn peculiarity.

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Near the town of Boulogne, and overhanging the beach, are the remains of a tower which bears the name of Caligula, who here terminated his western expedition, of which these sea-shells were the boasted spoils. And at no great distance from these ruins, Buonaparte, standing upon a mound of earth, harangued his "Army of England," reminding them of the exploits of Cæsar, and pointing towards the white cliffs, upon which their standards *were to float*. He recommended also a subscription to be raised among the Soldiery to erect on that ground, in memory of the foundation of the "Legion of Honour," a Column—which was not completed at the time we were there.

Page 596

'*We mark majestic herds of cattle, free*
To ruminate.'

This is a most grateful sight for an Englishman returning to his native land. Everywhere one misses in the cultivated grounds abroad, the animated and soothing accompaniment of animals ranging and selecting their own food at will.

Page 597

'*Far as St. Maurice, from yon eastern*
Forks.'

LES FOURCHES, the point at which the two chains of mountains part, that inclose the Valais, which terminates at ST. MAURICE.

Page 597

——————— '*ye that occupy*
Your council-seats beneath the open sky,
On Sarnen's Mount.'

Sarnen, one of the two capitals of the Canton of Underwalden; the spot here alluded to is close to the town, and is called the Landenberg, from the tyrant of that name, whose château formerly stood there. On the 1st of January 1308, the great day which the confederated Heroes had chosen for the deliverance of their country, all the castles of the Governors were taken by force or stratagem; and the Tyrants themselves conducted, with their creatures, to the frontiers, after having witnessed the destruction of their strongholds. From that time the Landenberg has been the place where the Legislators of this division of the Canton assemble. The site, which is well described by Ebel, is one of the most beautiful in Switzerland.

Page 597

'*Calls me to pace her honoured Bridge—*

The bridges of Lucerne are roofed, and open at the sides, so that the passenger has, at the same time, the benefit of shade, and a view of the magnificent country. The pictures are attached to the rafters; those from Scripture History, on the Cathedral-bridge, amount, according to my notes, to 240. Subjects from the Old Testament face the passenger as he goes towards the Cathedral, and those from the New as he returns. The pictures on these bridges, as well as those in most other parts of Switzerland, are not to be spoken of as works of art; but they are instruments admirably answering the purpose for which they were designed.

Page 597

'*The River Duddon.*'

A Poet, whose works are not yet known as they deserve to be, thus enters upon his description of the "Ruins of Rome:"

> "The rising Sun
> Flames on the ruins in the purer air
> Towering aloft;"

and ends thus—

> "The setting Sun displays
> His visible great round, between yon towers,
> As through two shady cliffs."

Mr. Crowe, in his excellent loco-descriptive Poem, "Lewesdon Hill," is still more expeditious, finishing the whole on a May-morning, before breakfast.

> "To-morrow for severer thought, but now
> To breakfast, and keep festival to-day."

No one believes, or is desired to believe, that those Poems were actually composed within such limits of time; nor was there any reason why a prose statement should acquaint the reader with the plain fact, to the disturbance of poetic credibility. But, in the present case, I am compelled to mention, that the above series of Sonnets was the growth of many years;—the one which stands the 14th was the first produced; and others were added upon occasional visits to the Stream, or as recollections of the scenes upon its banks awakened a wish to describe them. In this manner I had proceeded insensibly, without perceiving that I was trespassing upon ground pre-occupied, at least as far as intention went, by Mr. Coleridge; who, more than twenty years ago, used to speak of writing a rural Poem, to be entitled "The Brook," of which he has given a sketch in a recent publication. But a particular subject cannot, I think, much interfere with a general one; and I have been further kept from encroaching upon any right Mr. C. may still wish to exercise, by the restriction which the frame of the Sonnet imposed upon me, narrowing unavoidably the range of thought, and precluding, though not without its advantages, many graces to which a freer movement of verse would naturally have led.

May I not venture, then, to hope, that, instead of being a hindrance by anticipation of any part of the subject, these Sonnets may remind Mr. Coleridge of his own more comprehensive design, and induce him to fulfil it?——There is a sympathy in streams,—"one calleth to another;" and I would gladly believe, that "The Brook" will, ere long, murmur in concert with "The Duddon." But, asking pardon for this fancy, I need not scruple to say that those verses must indeed be ill-fated which can enter upon such pleasant walks of nature without receiving and giving inspiration. The power of waters over the minds of Poets has been acknowledged from the earliest ages;—through the "Flumina amem sylvasque inglorius" of Virgil, down to the sublime apostrophe to the great rivers of the earth by Armstrong, and the simple ejaculation of Burns (chosen, if I recollect right, by Mr. Coleridge, as a motto for his embryo "Brook").

"The Muse nae Poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel' he learned to wander,
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
AND NA' THINK LANG."

Page 600

'*There bloomed the strawberry of the wilderness,*
The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire blue.'

These two lines are in a great measure taken from "The Beauties of Spring, a Juvenile Poem," by the Rev. Joseph Sympson. He was a native of Cumberland, and was educated in the vale of Grasmere, and at Hawkshead school: his poems are little known, but they contain passages of splendid description; and the versification of his "Vision of Alfred" is harmonious and animated. In describing the motions of the Sylphs that constitute the strange machinery of his Poem, he uses the following illustrative simile:—

——— "Glancing from their plumes
A changeful light the azure vault illumes.
Less varying hues beneath the Pole adorn
The streamy glories of the Boreal morn,
That wavering to and fro their radiance shed
On Bothnia's gulf with glassy ice o'erspread.
Where the lone native, as he homeward glides,
On polished sandals o'er the imprisoned tides,
And still the balance of his frame preserves,
Wheeled on alternate foot in lengthening curves,
Sees at a glance, above him and below,
Two rival heavens with equal splendour glow.
Sphered in the centre of the world he seems;
For all around with soft effulgence gleams;
Stars, moons, and meteors, ray opposed to ray,
And solemn midnight pours the blaze of day."

He was a man of ardent feeling, and his faculties of mind, particularly his memory, were extraordinary. Brief notices of his life ought to find a place in the History of Westmoreland.

Page 603. Sonnets XVII and XVIII

The EAGLE requires a large domain for its support: but several pairs, not many years ago, were constantly resident in this country, building their nests in the steeps of Borrowdale, Wastdale, Ennerdale, and on the eastern side of Helvellyn. Often have I heard anglers speak of the grandeur of their appearance, as they hovered over Red Tarn, in one of the coves of this mountain. The bird frequently returns, but is always destroyed. Not long since, one visited Rydal lake, and remained some hours near its banks: the consternation which it occasioned among the different species of fowl, particularly the herons, was expressed by loud screams. The horse also is naturally afraid of the eagle.—There were several Roman stations among these mountains; the most considerable seems to have been in a meadow at the head of Windermere, established, undoubtedly, as a check over the passes of Kirkstone, Dunmail-raise, and of Hardknot and Wrynose. On the margin of Rydal lake, a coin of Trajan was discovered very lately.—The ROMAN FORT here alluded to, called by the country people "*Hardknot Castle*," is most impressively situated half-way down the hill on the right of the road that descends from Hardknot into Eskdale. It has escaped the notice of most antiquarians, and is but slightly mentioned by Lysons.—The DRUIDICAL CIRCLE is about half a mile to the left of the road ascending Stoneside from the vale of Duddon: the country people call it "*Sunken Church.*"

The reader who may have been interested in the foregoing Sonnets (which together may be considered as a Poem) will not be displeased to find in this place a prose account of the Duddon, extracted from Green's comprehensive *Guide to the Lakes*, lately published. "The road leading from Coniston to Broughton is over high ground, and commands a view of the River Duddon; which, at high water, is a grand sight, having the beautiful and fertile lands of Lancashire and Cumberland stretching each way from its margin. In this extensive view, the face of nature is displayed in a wonderful variety of hill and dale, wooded grounds and buildings; amongst the latter Broughton Tower, seated on the crown of a hill, rising elegantly from the valley, is an object of extraordinary interest. Fertility on each side is gradually diminished, and lost in the superior heights of Blackcomb, in Cumberland, and the high lands between Kirkby and Ulverstone.

"The road from Broughton to Seathwaite is on the banks of the Duddon, and on its Lancashire side it is of various elevations. The river is an amusing companion, one while brawling and tumbling over rocky precipices, until the agitated water becomes again calm by arriving at a smoother and less precipitous bed, but its course is soon again ruffled, and the current thrown into every variety of foam which the rocky channel of a river can give to water."—*Vide Green's Guide to the Lakes*, vol. i. pp. 98-100.

After all, the traveller would be most gratified who should approach this beautiful Stream, neither at its source, as is done in the Sonnets, nor from its termination; but from Coniston over Walna Scar; first descending into a little circular valley, a collateral compartment of the long winding vale through which flows the Duddon. This recess, towards the close of September, when the after-grass of the meadows is still of a fresh green, with the leaves of many of the trees faded, but perhaps none fallen, is truly enchanting. At a point elevated enough to show the various objects in the valley, and not so high as to diminish their importance, the stranger will instinctively halt. On the foreground, a little below the most favourable station, a rude foot-bridge is thrown over the bed of the noisy brook foaming by the wayside. Russet and craggy hills, of bold and varied outline, surround the level valley, which is besprinkled with grey rocks plumed with birch trees. A few homesteads are interspersed, in some places peeping out from among the rocks like hermitages, whose site has been chosen for the benefit of sunshine as well as shelter; in other instances, the dwelling-house, barn, and byre, compose together a cruciform structure, which, with its embowering trees, and the ivy clothing part of the walls and roof like a fleece, call to mind the remains of an ancient abbey. Time, in most cases, and nature everywhere, have given a sanctity to the humble works of man that are scattered over this peaceful retirement. Hence a harmony of tone and colour, a consummation and perfection of beauty, which would have been marred had aim or purpose interfered with the course of convenience, utility, or necessity. This unvitiated region stands in no need of the veil of twilight to soften or disguise its features. As it glistens in the morning sunshine, it would fill the spectator's heart with gladsomeness. Looking from our chosen station, he would feel an impatience to rove among its pathways, to be greeted by the milkmaid, to wander from house to house exchanging "good-morrows" as he passed the open doors; but, at evening, when the sun is set, and a pearly light gleams from the western quarter of the sky, with an answering light from the smooth surface of the meadows; when the trees are dusky, but each kind still distinguishable; when the cool air has condensed the blue smoke rising from the cottage chimneys; when the dark mossy stones seem to sleep in the bed of the foaming brook; *then* he would be unwilling to move forward, not less from a reluctance to relinquish what he beholds, than from an apprehension of disturbing, by his approach, the quietness beneath him. Issuing from the plain of this valley, the brook descends in a rapid torrent passing by the churchyard of Seathwaite. The traveller is thus conducted at once into the midst of the wild and beautiful scenery which gave occasion to the Sonnets from the 14th to the 20th inclusive. From the point where the Seathwaite brook joins the Duddon is a view upwards into the pass through which the river makes its way into the plain of Donnerdale. The perpendicular rock on the right bears the ancient British name of THE PEN; the one opposite is called WALLA-BARROW CRAG, a name that occurs in other places to designate rocks of the same character. The *chaotic* aspect of the scene is well marked by the expression of a stranger, who strolled out while dinner was preparing, and at his return, being asked by his host, "What way he had been wandering?" replied, "As far as it is *finished!*"

The bed of the Duddon is here strewn with large fragments of rocks fallen from aloft; which, as Mr. Green truly says, "are happily adapted to the many-shaped waterfalls" (or rather waterbreaks, for none of them are high) "displayed in the short space of half a mile." That there is some hazard in frequenting these desolate places, I myself have had proof; for one night an immense mass of rock fell upon the very spot where, with a friend, I had lingered the day before. "The concussion," says Mr. Green, speaking of the event (for he also, in the practice of his art, on that day sat exposed for a still longer time to the same peril), "was heard, not without alarm, by the neighbouring shepherds." But to return to Seathwaite Churchyard: it contains the following inscription:—

"In memory of the Reverend Robert Walker, who died the 25th of June 1802, in the 93d year of his age, and 67th of his curacy at Seathwaite.

"Also, of Anne his wife, who died the 28th of January, in the 93d year of her age."

In the parish-register of Seathwaite Chapel is this notice:—

"Buried, June 28th, the Rev. Robert Walker. He was curate of Seathwaite sixty-six years. He was a man singular for his temperance, industry, and integrity."

This individual is the Pastor alluded to, in the 18th Sonnet, as a worthy compeer of the country parson of Chaucer, etc. In the seventh book of the Excursion, an abstract of his character is given, beginning,

"A Priest abides before whose life such doubts
Fall to the ground;—"

and some account of his life, for it is worthy of being recorded, will not be out of place here.

MEMOIR OF THE REV. ROBERT WALKER

In the year 1709, Robert Walker was born at Under-crag, in Seathwaite; he was the youngest of twelve children. His eldest brother, who inherited the small family estate, died at Under-crag, aged ninety-four, being twenty-four years older than the subject of this memoir, who was born of the same mother. Robert was a sickly infant; and, through his boyhood and youth, continuing to be of delicate frame and tender health, it was deemed best, according to the country phrase, to *breed him a scholar;* for it was not likely that he would be able to earn a livelihood by bodily labour. At that period few of these dales were furnished with school-houses; the children being taught to read and write in the chapel; and in the same consecrated building, where he officiated for so many years both as preacher and schoolmaster, he himself received the rudiments of his education. In his youth he became schoolmaster at Loweswater; not being called upon, probably, in that situation to teach more than reading writing, and arithmetic. But, by the assistance of a "Gentleman" in the neighbourhood, he acquired, at leisure hours, a knowledge of the classics, and became qualified for taking holy orders. Upon his ordination, he had the offer of two curacies: the one, Torver, in the vale of Coniston,—the other, Seathwaite, in his native vale. The value of each was the same, viz. five pounds *per annum;* but the cure of Seathwaite having a cottage attached to it, as he wished to marry, he chose it in preference. The young person on whom his affections were fixed, though in the condition of a domestic servant, had given promise, by her serious and modest deportment, and by her virtuous dispositions, that she was worthy to become the helpmate of a man entering upon a plan of life such as he had marked out for himself. By her frugality she had stored up a small sum of money, with which they began housekeeping. In 1735 or 1736, he entered upon his curacy; and, nineteen years afterwards, his situation is thus described, in some letters to be found in the Annual Register for 1760, from which the following is extracted:—

"To Mr. ——

"*Coniston, July* 26, 1754.

"SIR—I was the other day upon a party of pleasure, about five or six miles from this place, where I met with a very striking object, and of a nature not very common. Going into a clergyman's house (of whom I had frequently heard), I found him sitting at the head of a long square table, such as is commonly used in this country by the lower class of people, dressed in a coarse blue frock, trimmed with black horn buttons; a checked shirt, a leathern strap about his neck for a stock, a coarse apron, and a pair of great wooden-soled shoes plated with iron to preserve them (what we call clogs in these parts), with a child upon his knee, eating his breakfast; his wife, and the remainder of his children, were some of them employed in waiting upon each other, the rest in teasing and spinning wool, at which trade he is a great proficient; and moreover, when it is made ready for sale, will lay it, by sixteen or thirty-two pounds' weight, upon his back, and on foot, seven or eight miles, will carry it to the market, even in the depth of winter. I was not much surprised at all this, as you may possibly be, having heard a great deal of it related before. But I must confess myself astonished with the alacrity and the good humour that appeared both in the clergyman and his wife, and more so at the sense and ingenuity of the clergyman himself." * *

Then follows a letter from another person, dated 1755, from which an extract shall be given:—

"By his frugality and good management he keeps the wolf from the door, as we say; and if he advances a little in the world, it is owing more to his own care than to anything else he has to rely upon. I don't find his inclination is running after further preferment. He is settled among the people, that are happy among themselves; and lives in the greatest unanimity and friendship with them; and, I believe, the minister and people are exceedingly satisfied with each other; and indeed how should they be dissatisfied when they have a person of so much worth and probity for their pastor? A man who, for his candour and meekness, his sober, chaste, and virtuous conversation, his soundness in principle and practice, is an ornament to his profession, and an honour to the country he is in; and bear with me if I say, the plainness of his dress, the sanctity of his manners, the simplicity of his doctrine, and the vehemence of his expression, have a sort of resemblance to the pure practice of primitive Christianity."

We will now give his own account of himself, to be found in the same place.

FROM THE REV. ROBERT WALKER

"SIR—Yours of the 26th instant was communicated to me by Mr. C——, and I should have returned an immediate answer, but the hand of Providence, then laying heavy upon an amiable pledge of conjugal endearment, hath since taken from me a promising girl, which the disconsolate mother too pensively laments the loss of; though we have yet eight living, all healthful, hopeful children, whose names and ages are as follows:—Zaccheus, aged almost eighteen years; Elizabeth, sixteen years and ten months; Mary, fifteen; Moses, thirteen years and three months; Sarah, ten years and three months; Mabel, eight years and three months; William Tyson, three years and eight months; and Anne Esther, one year and three months; besides Anne, who died two years and six months ago, and was then aged between nine and ten; and Eleanor, who died the 23d inst., January, aged six years and ten months. Zaccheus, the eldest child, is now learning the trade of a tanner, and has two years and a half of his apprenticeship to serve. The annual income of my chapel at present, as near as I can compute it, may amount to about 17*l.*, of which is paid in cash, viz. 5*l.* from the bounty of Queen Anne, and 5*l.* from W. P., Esq., of P——, out of the annual rents, he being lord of the manor, and 3*l.* from the several inhabitants of L——, settled upon the tenements as a rent-charge; the house and gardens I value at 4*l.* yearly, and not worth more; and I believe the surplice fees and voluntary contributions, one year with another, may be worth 3*l.*; but as the inhabitants are few in number, and the fees very low, this last-mentioned sum consists merely in free-will offerings.

"I am situated greatly to my satisfaction with regard to the conduct and behaviour of my auditory, who not only live in the happy ignorance of the follies and vices of the age, but in mutual peace and goodwill with one another, and are seemingly (I hope really too) sincere Christians, and sound members of the established church, not one dissenter of any denomination being amongst them all. I got to the value of 40*l.* for my wife's fortune, but had no real estate of my own, being the youngest son of twelve children, born of obscure parents; and, though my income has been but small, and my family large, yet, by a providential blessing upon my own diligent endeavours, the kindness of friends, and a cheap country to live in, we have always had the necessaries of life. By what I have written (which is a true and exact account, to the best of my knowledge) I hope you will not think your favour to me out of the late worthy Dr. Stratford's effects quite misbestowed, for which I must ever gratefully own myself, Sir, your much obliged and most obedient humble servant,

"R. W., Curate of S——.

"To Mr. C., of Lancaster."

About the time when this letter was written, the Bishop of Chester recommended the scheme of joining the curacy of Ulpha to the contiguous one of Seathwaite, and the nomination was offered to Mr. Walker; but an unexpected difficulty arising, Mr. W., in a letter to the Bishop (a copy of which, in his own beautiful handwriting, now lies before me), thus expresses himself. "If he," meaning the person in whom the difficulty originated, "had suggested any such objection before, I should utterly have declined any attempt to the curacy of Ulpha: indeed, I was always apprehensive it might be disagreeable to my auditory at Seathwaite, as they have been always accustomed to double duty, and the inhabitants of Ulpha despair of being able to support a schoolmaster who is not curate there also; which suppressed all thoughts in me of serving them both." And in a second letter to the Bishop he writes:—

"My Lord—I have the favour of yours of the 1st instant, and am exceedingly obliged on account of the Ulpha affair: if that curacy should lapse into your Lordship's hands, I would beg leave rather to decline than embrace it; for the chapels of Seathwaite and Ulpha, annexed together, would be apt to cause a general discontent among the inhabitants of both places; by either thinking themselves slighted, being only served alternately, or neglected in the duty, or attributing it to covetousness in me; all which occasions of murmuring I would willingly avoid." And in concluding his former letter, he expresses a similar sentiment upon the same occasion, "desiring, if it be possible, however, as much as in me lieth, to live peaceably with all men."

The year following, the curacy of Seathwaite was again augmented; and, to effect this augmentation, fifty pounds had been advanced by himself; and, in 1760, lands were purchased with eight hundred pounds. Scanty as was his income, the frequent offer of much better benefices could not tempt Mr. W. to quit a situation where he had been so long happy, with a consciousness of being useful. Among his papers I find the following copy of a letter, dated 1775, twenty years after his refusal of the curacy of Ulpha, which will show what exertions had been made for one of his sons.

"May it please your Grace—Our remote situation here makes it difficult to get the necessary information for transacting business regularly; such is the reason of my giving your Grace the present trouble.

"The bearer (my son) is desirous of offering himself candidate for deacon's orders at your Grace's ensuing ordination; the first, on the 25th instant, so that his papers could not be transmitted in due time. As he is now fully at age, and I have afforded him education to the utmost of my ability, it would give me great satisfaction (if your Grace would take him, and find him qualified) to have him ordained. His constitution has been tender for some years; he entered the college of Dublin, but his health would not permit him to continue there, or I would have supported him much longer. He has been with me at home above a year, in which time he has gained great strength of body, sufficient, I hope, to enable him for performing the function. Divine Providence, assisted by liberal benefactors, has blest my endeavours, from a small income, to rear a numerous family; and as my time of life renders me now unfit for much future expectancy from this world, I should be glad to see my son settled in a promising way to acquire an honest livelihood for himself. His behaviour, so far in life, has been irreproachable; and I hope he will not degenerate, in principles or practice, from the precepts and pattern of an indulgent parent. Your Grace's favourable reception of this, from a distant corner of the diocese, and an obscure hand, will excite filial gratitude, and a due use shall be made of the obligation vouchsafed thereby to your Grace's very dutiful and most obedient Son and Servant, ROBERT WALKER.'

The same man, who was thus liberal in the education of his numerous family, was even munificent in hospitality as a parish priest. Every Sunday were served upon the long table, at which he has been described sitting with a child upon his knee, messes of broth for the refreshment of those of his congregation who came from a distance, and usually took their seats as parts of his own household. It seems scarcely possible that this custom could have commenced before the augmentation of his cure; and what would to many have been a high price of self-denial was paid, by the pastor and his family, for this gratification; as the treat could only be provided by dressing at one time the whole, perhaps, of their weekly allowance of fresh animal food; consequently, for a succession of days, the table was covered with cold victuals only. His generosity in old age may be still further illustrated by a little circumstance relating to an orphan grandson, then ten years of age, which I find in a copy of a letter to one of his sons; he requests that half a guinea may be left for "little Robert's pocket-money," who was then at school: intrusting it to the care of a lady, who, as he says, "may sometimes frustrate his squandering it away foolishly," and promising to send him an equal allowance annually for the same purpose. The conclusion of the same letter is so characteristic, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it. "We," meaning his wife and himself, "are in our wonted state of health, allowing for the hasty strides of old age knocking daily at our door, and threateningly telling us we are not only mortal, but must expect ere long to take our leave of our ancient cottage, and lie down in our last dormitory. Pray pardon my neglect to answer yours: let us hear sooner from you, to augment the mirth of the Christmas holidays. Wishing you all the pleasures of the approaching season, I am, dear Son, with lasting sincerity, yours affectionately,

"ROBERT WALKER."

He loved old customs and old usages, and in some instances stuck to them to his own loss; for, having had a sum of money lodged in the hands of a neighbouring tradesman, when long course of time had raised the rate of interest, and more was offered, he refused to accept it; an act not difficult to one, who, while he was drawing seventeen pounds a year from his curacy, declined, as we have seen, to add the profits of another small benefice to his own, lest he should be suspected of cupidity. From this vice he was utterly free; he made no charge for teaching school; such as could afford to pay gave him what they pleased. When very young, having kept a diary of his expenses, however trifling, the large amount, at the end of the year, surprised him; and from that time the rule of his life was to be economical, not avaricious. At his decease he left behind him no less a sum than 2000*l.*; and such a sense of his various excellences was prevalent in the country, that the epithet of WONDERFUL is to this day attached to his name.

There is in the above sketch something so extraordinary as to require further *explanatory* details.—And to begin with his industry; eight hours in each day, during five days in the week, and half of Saturday, except when the labours of husbandry were urgent, he was occupied in teaching. His seat was within the rails of the altar; the communion table was his desk; and, like Shenstone's schoolmistress, the master employed himself at the spinning-wheel, while the children were repeating their lessons by his side. Every evening, after school hours, if not more profitably engaged, he continued the same kind of labour, exchanging, for the benefit of exercise, the small wheel, at which he had sate, for the large one on which wool is spun, the spinner stepping to and fro. Thus was the wheel constantly in readiness to prevent the waste of a moment's time. Nor was his industry with the pen, when occasion called for it, less eager. Intrusted with extensive management of public and private affairs, he acted, in his rustic neighbourhood, as scrivener, writing out petitions, deeds of conveyance, wills, covenants, etc., with pecuniary gain to himself, and to the great benefit of his employers. These labours (at all times considerable) at one period of the year, viz. between Christmas and Candlemas, when money transactions are settled in this country, were often so intense, that he passed great part of the night, and sometimes whole nights, at his desk. His garden also was tilled by his own hand; he had a right of pasturage upon the mountains for a few sheep and a couple of cows, which required his attendance; with this pastoral occupation he joined the labours of husbandry upon a small scale, renting two or three acres in addition to his own less than one acre of glebe; and the humblest drudgery which the cultivation of these fields required was performed by himself.

He also assisted his neighbours in haymaking and shearing their flocks, and in the performance of this latter service he was eminently dexterous. They, in their turn, complimented him with the present of a haycock, or a fleece; less as a recompence for this particular service than as a general acknowledgment. The Sabbath was in a strict sense kept holy; the Sunday evenings being devoted to reading the Scripture and family prayer. The principal festivals appointed by the Church were also duly observed; but through every other day in the week, through every week in the year, he was incessantly occupied in work of hand or mind; not allowing a moment for recreation, except upon a Saturday afternoon, when he indulged himself with a Newspaper, or sometimes with a Magazine. The frugality and temperance established in his house were as admirable as the industry. Nothing to which the name of luxury could be given was there known; in the latter part of his life, indeed, when tea had been brought into almost general use, it was provided for visitors, and for such of his own family as returned occasionally to his roof, and had been accustomed to this refreshment elsewhere; but neither he nor his wife ever partook of it. The raiment worn by his family was comely and decent, but as simple as their diet; the home-spun materials were made up into apparel by their own hands. At the time of the decease of this thrifty pair, their cottage contained a large store of webs of woollen and linen cloth, woven from thread of their own spinning. And it is remarkable that the pew in the chapel in which the family used to sit, remains neatly lined with woollen cloth spun by the pastor's own hands. It is the only pew in the chapel so distinguished; and I know of no other instance of his conformity to the delicate accommodations of modern times. The fuel of the house, like that of their neighbours, consisted of peat, procured from the mosses by their own labour. The lights by which, in the winter evenings, their work was performed, were of their own manufacture, such as still continue to be used in these cottages; they are made of the pith of rushes dipped in any unctuous substance that the house affords. *White* candles, as tallow candles are here called, were reserved to honour the Christmas festivals, and were perhaps produced upon no other occasions. Once a month, during the proper season, a sheep was drawn from their small mountain flock, and killed for the use of the family; and a cow, towards the close of the year was salted and dried for winter provision; the hide was tanned to furnish them with shoes.—By these various resources, this venerable clergyman reared a numerous family, not only preserving them, as he affectingly says, "from wanting the necessaries of life;" but affording them an unstinted education, and the means of raising themselves in society. In this they were eminently assisted by the effects of their father's example, his precepts, and injunctions: he was aware that truth-speaking, as a moral virtue, is best secured by inculcating attention to accuracy of report even on trivial occasions; and so rigid were the rules of honesty by which he endeavoured to bring up his family, that if one of them had chanced to find in the lanes or fields anything of the least use or value without being able to ascertain to whom it belonged, he always insisted upon the child's carrying it back to the place from which it had been brought.

No one, it might be thought, could, as has been described, convert his body into a machine, as it were, of industry for the humblest uses, and keep his thoughts so frequently bent upon secular concerns, without grievous injury to the more precious parts of his nature. How could the powers of intellect thrive, or its graces be displayed, in the midst of circumstances apparently so unfavourable, and where, to the direct cultivation of the mind, so small a portion of time was allotted? But, in this extraordinary man, things in their nature adverse were reconciled. His conversation was remarkable, not only for being chaste and pure, but for the degree in which it was fervent and eloquent; his written style was correct, simple, and animated. Nor did his *affections* suffer more than his intellect; he was tenderly alive to all the duties of his pastoral office: the poor and needy "he never sent empty away,"—the stranger was fed and refreshed in passing that unfrequented vale—the sick were visited; and the feelings of humanity found further exercise among the distresses and embarrassments in the worldly estate of his neighbours, with which his talents for business made him acquainted; and the disinterestedness, impartiality, and uprightness which he maintained in the management of all affairs confided to him were virtues seldom separated in his own conscience from religious obligation. Nor could such conduct fail to remind those who witnessed it of a spirit nobler than law or custom: they felt convictions which, but for such intercourse, could not have been afforded, that as in the practice of their pastor there was no guile, so in his faith there was nothing hollow; and we are warranted in believing that upon these occasions selfishness, obstinacy, and discord would often give way before the breathings of his good-will and saintly integrity. It may be presumed also—while his humble congregation were listening to the moral precepts which he delivered from the pulpit, and to the Christian exhortations that they should love their neighbours as themselves, and do as they would be done unto—that peculiar efficacy was given to the preacher's labours by recollections in the minds of his congregation that they were called upon to do no more than his own actions were daily setting before their eyes.

The afternoon service in the chapel was less numerously attended than that of the morning, but by a more serious auditory; the lesson from the New Testament, on those occasions, was accompanied by Burkitt's Commentaries. These lessons he read with impassioned emphasis, frequently drawing tears from his hearers, and leaving a lasting impression upon their minds. His devotional feelings and the powers of his own mind were further exercised, along with those of his family, in perusing the Scriptures: not only on the Sunday evenings, but on every other evening, while the rest of the household were at work, some one of the children, and in her turn the servant, for the sake of practice in reading, or for instruction, read the Bible aloud; and in this manner the whole was repeatedly gone through. That no common importance was attached to the observance of religious ordinances by his family, appears from the following memorandum by one of his descendants, which I am tempted to insert at length, as it is characteristic and somewhat curious. "There is a small chapel in the county palatine of Lancaster, where a certain clergyman has regularly officiated above sixty years, and a few months ago administered the sacramen of the Lord's Supper in the same, to a decent number of devout communicants. After the clergyman had received himself, the first company out of the assembly who approached the altar, and kneeled down to be partakers of the sacred elements, consisted of the parson's wife, to whom he had been married upwards of sixty years; one son and his wife; four daughters, each with her husband; whose ages, all added together, amount to above 714 years. The several and respective distances from the place of each of their abodes to the chapel where they all communicated, will measure more than 1000 English miles. Though the narration will appear surprising, it is without doubt a fact that the same persons, exactly four years before, met at the same place, and all joined in performance of the same venerable duty."

He was indeed most zealously attached to the doctrine and frame of the Established Church. We have seen him congratulating himself that he had no dissenters in his cure of any denomination. Some allowance must be made for the state of opinion when his first religious impressions were received, before the reader will acquit him of bigotry, when I mention that at the time of the augmentation of the cure, he refused to invest part of the money in the purchase of an estate offered to him upon advantageous terms, because the proprietor was a quaker;—whether from scrupulous apprehension that a blessing would not attend a contract framed for the benefit of the church between persons not in religious sympathy with each other; or, as a seeker of peace, he was afraid of the uncomplying disposition which at one time was too frequently conspicuous in that sect. Of this an instance had fallen under his own notice; for, while he taught school at Loweswater, certain persons of that denomination had refused to pay annual interest due under the title of Church-stock;[1] a great hardship upon the incumbent, for the curacy of Loweswater was then scarcely less poor than that of Seathwaite. To what degree this prejudice of his was blamable need not be determined;—certain it is, that he was not only desirous, as he himself says, to live in peace, but in love, with all men. He was placable, and charitable in his judgments; and, however correct in conduct and rigorous to himself, he was ever ready to forgive the trespasses of others, and to soften the censure that was cast upon their frailties.—It would be unpardonable to omit that, in the maintenance of his virtues, he received due support from the partner of his long life. She was equally strict, in attending to her share of their joint cares, nor less diligent in her appropriate occupations. A person who had been some time their servant in the latter part of their lives, concluded the panegyric of her mistress by saying to me, "She was no less excellent than her husband; she was good to the poor; she was good to everything!" He survived for a short time this virtuous companion. When she died, he ordered that her body should be borne to the grave by three of her daughters and one granddaughter; and, when the corpse was lifted from the threshold, he insisted upon lending his aid, and feeling about, for he was then almost blind, took hold of a napkin fixed to the coffin; and, as a bearer of the body, entered the chapel, a few steps from the lowly parsonage.

What a contrast does the life of this obscurely-seated, and, in point of worldly wealth, poorly-repaid Churchman, present to that of a Cardinal Wolsey!

> "O 'tis a burthen, Cromwell, 'tis a burthen
> Too heavy for a man who hopes for heaven!"

We have been dwelling upon images of peace in the moral world, that have brought us again to the quiet enclosure of consecrated ground in which this venerable pair lie interred. The sounding brook, that rolls close by the churchyard, without disturbing feeling or meditation, is now unfortunately laid bare; but not long ago it participated, with the chapel, the shade of some stately ash-trees, which will not spring again. While the spectator from this spot is looking round upon the girdle of stony mountains that encompasses the vale,—masses of rock, out of which monuments for all men that ever existed might have been hewn—it would surprise him to be told, as with truth he might be, that the plain blue slab dedicated to the memory of this aged pair is a production of a quarry in North Wales. It was sent as a mark of respect by one of their descendants from the vale of Festiniog, a region almost as beautiful as that in which it now lies!

Upon the Seathwaite Brook, at a small distance from the parsonage, has been erected a mill for spinning yarn; it is a mean and disagreeable object, though not unimportant to the spectator, as calling to mind the momentous changes wrought by such inventions in the frame of society—changes which have proved especially unfavourable to these mountain solitudes. So much had been effected by those new powers, before the subject of the preceding biographical sketch closed his life, that their operation could not escape his notice, and doubtless excited touching reflections upon the comparatively insignificant results of his own manual industry. But Robert Walker was not a man of times and circumstances; had he lived at a later period, the principle of duty would have produced application as unremitting; the same energy of character would have been displayed, though in many instances with widely-different effects.

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[1] Mr. Walker's charity being of that kind which "seeketh not her own," he would rather forego his rights than distrain for dues which the parties liable refused, as a point of conscience, to pay.

With pleasure I annex, as illustrative and confirmatory of the above account, extracts from a paper in the Christian Remembrancer, October 1819: it bears an assumed signature, but is known to be the work of the Rev. Robert Bamford, vicar of Bishopton, in the county of Durham; a great-grandson of Mr. Walker, whose worth it commemorates, by a record not the less valuable for being written in very early youth.

"His house was a nursery of virtue. All the inmates were industrious, and cleanly, and happy. Sobriety, neatness, quietness, characterised the whole family. No railings, no idleness, no indulgence of passion were permitted. Every child, however young, had its appointed engagements; every hand was busy. Knitting, spinning, reading, writing, mending clothes, making shoes, were by the different children constantly performing. The father himself sitting amongst them, and guiding their thoughts, was engaged in the same occupations. * * *

"He sate up late, and rose early; when the family were at rest, he retired to a little room which he had built on the roof of his house. He had slated it, and fitted it up with shelves for his books, his stock of cloth, wearing apparel, and his utensils. There many a cold winter's night, without fire, while the roof was glazed with ice, did he remain reading or writing till the day dawned. He taught the children in the chapel, for there was no schoolhouse. Yet in that cold, damp place he never had a fire. He used to send the children in parties either to his own fire at home or make them run up the mountain side.

* * * *

"It may be further mentioned, that he was a passionate admirer of Nature; she was his mother, and he was a dutiful child. While engaged on the mountains, it was his greatest pleasure to view the rising sun; and in tranquil evenings, as it slided behind the hills, he blessed its departure. He was skilled in fossils and plants; a constant observer of the stars and winds: the atmosphere was his delight. He made many experiments on its nature and properties. In summer he used to gather a multitude of flies and insects, and, by his entertaining description, amuse and instruct his children. They shared all his daily employments, and derived many sentiments of love and benevolence from his observations on the works and productions of nature. Whether they were following him in the field, or surrounding him in school, he took every opportunity of storing their minds with useful information.—Nor was the circle of his influence confined to Seathwaite. Many a distant mother has told her child of Mr. Walker, and begged him to be as good a man.

* * * *

"Once, when I was very young, I had the pleasure of seeing and hearing that venerable old man in his 90th year, and even then, the calmness, the force, the perspicuity of his sermon, sanctified and adorned by the wisdom of grey hairs, and the authority of virtue, had such an effect upon my mind, that I never see a hoary-headed clergyman, without thinking of Mr. Walker * * . He allowed no dissenter or methodist to interfere in the instruction of the souls committed to his cure: and so successful were his exertions, that he had not one dissenter of any denomination whatever in the whole parish.—Though he avoided all religious controversies, yet when age had silvered his head, and virtuous piety had secured to his appearance reverence and silent honour, no one, however determined in his hatred of apostolic descent, could have listened to his discourse on ecclesiastical history and ancient times, without thinking that one of the beloved apostles had returned to mortality, and in that vale of peace had come to exemplify the beauty of holiness in the life and character of Mr. Walker.

* * * *

"Until the sickness of his wife, a few months previous to her death, his health and spirits and faculties were unimpaired. But this misfortune gave him such a shock that his constitution gradually decayed. His senses, except sight, still preserved their powers. He never preached with steadiness after his wife's death. His voice faltered: he always looked at the seat she had used. He could not pass her tomb without tears. He became, when alone, sad and melancholy, though still among his friends kind and good-humoured. He went to bed about twelve o'clock the night before his death. As his custom was, he went, tottering and leaning upon his daughter's arm, to examine the heavens, and meditate a few moments in the open air. 'How clear the moon shines to-night!' He said these words, sighed, and laid down. At six next morning he was found a corpse. Many a tear, and many a heavy heart, and many a grateful blessing followed him to the grave."

Having mentioned in this narrative the vale of Loweswater as a place where Mr. Walker taught school, I will add a few memoranda from its parish register, respecting a person apparently of desires as moderate, with whom he must have been intimate during his residence there.

"Let him that would, ascend the tottering seat
Of courtly grandeur, and become as great
As are his mounting wishes; but for me,
Let sweet repose and rest my portion be.
HENRY FOREST, Curate."

"Honour, the idol which the most adore,
Receives no homage from my knee;
Content in privacy I value more
Than all uneasy dignity."

"Henry Forest came to Loweswater, 1708, being 25 years of age."

"This curacy was twice augmented by Queen Anne's Bounty. The first payment, with great difficulty, was paid to Mr. John Curwen of London, on the 9th of May, 1724, deposited by me, Henry Forest, Curate of Loweswater. Y^e said 9th of May, y^e said Mr. Curwen went to the office, and saw my name registered there, &c. This, by the Providence of God, came by lot to this poor place.

"Hæc testor H. Forest."

In another place he records that the sycamore-trees were planted in the churchyard in 1710.

He died in 1741, having been curate thirty-four years. It is not improbable that H. Forest was the gentleman who assisted Robert Walker in his classical studies at Loweswater.

To this parish register is prefixed a motto, of which the following verses are a part:

"Invigilate viri, tacito nam tempora gressu
Diffugiunt, nulloque sono convertitur annus;
Utendum est ætate, cito pede præterit ætas."

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'*We feel that we are greater than we know.*'

"And feel that I am happier than I know."
MILTON.

The allusion to the Greek Poet will be obvious to the classical reader.

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'*Living hill.*'

———————— "awhile the living hill
Heaved with convulsive throes, and all was still."
DR. DARWIN.

Page 609

'*Ecclesiastical Sonnets.*'

During the month of December 1820, I accompanied a much-beloved and honoured Friend in a walk through different parts of his estate, with a view to fix upon the site of a new Church which he intended to erect. It was one of the most beautiful mornings of a mild season,—our feelings were in harmony with the cherishing influences of the scene; and such being our purpose, we were naturally led to look back upon past events with wonder and gratitude, and on the future with hope. Not long afterwards, some of the Sonnets which will be found towards the close of this series were produced as a private memorial of that morning's occupation.

The Catholic Question, which was agitated in Parliament about that time, kept my thoughts in the same course; and it struck me that certain points in the Ecclesiastical History of our Country might advantageously be presented to view in verse. Accordingly, I took up the subject, and what I now offer to the reader was the result.

When this work was far advanced, I was agreeably surprised to find that my friend, Mr. Southey, had been engaged with similar views in writing a concise History of the Church *in* England. If our Productions, thus unintentionally coinciding, shall be found to illustrate each other, it will prove a high gratification to me, which I am sure my friend will participate.

W. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, *January* 24, 1822.

For the convenience of passing from one point of the subject to another without shocks of abruptness, this work has taken the shape of a series of Sonnets: but the Reader, it is to be hoped, will find that the pictures are often so closely connected as to have jointly the effect of passages of a poem in a form of stanza to which there is no objection but one that bears upon the Poet only —its difficulty.

Page 610

'*Did Holy Paul,*' *etc.*

Stillingfleet adduces many arguments in support of this opinion, but they are unconvincing. The latter part of this Sonnet refers to a favourite notion of Roman Catholic writers, that Joseph of Arimathea and his companions brought Christianity into Britain, and built a rude church at Glastonbury; alluded to hereafter, in a passage upon the dissolution of monasteries.

Page 611

'*That Hill, whose flowery platform,*' *etc.*

This hill at St Alban's must have been an object of great interest to the imagination of the venerable Bede, who thus describes it, with a delicate feeling, delightful to meet with in that rude age, traces of which are frequent in his works:—"Variis herbarum floribus depictus imò usquequaque vestitus, in quo nihil repentè arduum, nihil præceps, nihil abruptum, quem lateribus longè latèque deductum in modum æquoris natura complanat, dignum videlicet eum pro insitâ sibi specie venustatis jam olim reddens, qui beati martyris cruore dicaretur."

Page 612

'*Nor wants the cause the panic-striking aid*
Of hallelujahs.'

Alluding to the victory gained under Germanus.—See Bede.

Page 612

'*By men yet scarcely conscious of a care*
For other monuments than those of Earth.'

The last six lines of this Sonnet are chiefly from the prose of Daniel; and here I will state (though to the Readers whom this Poem will chiefly interest it is unnecessary) that my obligations to other prose writers are frequent,—obligations which, even if I had not a pleasure in courting, it would have been presumptuous to shun, in treating an historical subject. I must, however, particularise Fuller, to whom I am indebted in the Sonnet upon Wicliffe and in other instances. And upon the acquittal of the Seven Bishops I have done little more than versify a lively description of that event in the MS. Memoirs of the first Lord Lonsdale.

Page 612. Sonnet XII

"Ethelforth reached the convent of Bangor, he perceived the Monks, twelve hundred in number, offering prayers for the success of their countrymen: 'If they are praying against us,' he exclaimed, 'they are fighting against us;' and he ordered them to be first attacked: they were destroyed; and, appalled by their fate, the courage of Brocmail wavered, and he fled from the field in dismay. Thus abandoned by their leader, his army soon gave way, and Ethelforth obtained a decisive conquest. Ancient Bangor itself soon fell into his hands, and was demolished; the noble monastery was levelled to the ground; its library, which is mentioned as a large one, the collection of ages, the repository of the most precious monuments of the ancient Britons, was consumed; half-ruined walls, gates, and rubbish were all that remained of the magnificent edifice."—See Turner's valuable history of the Anglo-Saxons.

Taliesin was present at the battle which preceded this desolation.

The account Bede gives of this remarkable event suggests a most striking warning against National and Religious prejudices.

Page 613. Sonnet XV

The person of Paulinus is thus described by Bede, from the memory of an eye-witness:—"Longæ staturæ, paululum incurvus, nigro capillo, facie macilentâ, naso adunco, pertenui, venerabilis simul et terribilis aspectu."

Page 613

'*Man's life is like a Sparrow.*'

See the original of this speech in Bede.—The Conversion of Edwin, as related by him, is highly interesting—and the breaking up of this Council accompanied with an event so striking and characteristic, that I am tempted to give it at length in a translation. "Who, exclaimed the King, when the Council was ended, shall first desecrate the altars and the temples? I, answered the Chief Priest; for who more fit than myself, through the wisdom which the true God hath given me, to destroy, for the good example of others, what in foolishness I worshipped? Immediately, casting away vain superstition, he besought the King to grant him what the laws did not allow to a priest, arms and a courser (equum emissarium); which mounting, and furnished with a sword and lance, he proceeded to destroy the Idols. The crowd, seeing this, thought him mad—he, however, halted not, but, approaching, he profaned the temple, casting against it the lance which he had held in his hand, and, exulting in acknowledgment of the worship of the true God, he ordered his companions to pull down the temple, with all its enclosures. The place is shown where those idols formerly stood, not far from York, at the source of the river Derwent, and is at this day called Gormund Gaham, ubi pontifex ille, inspirante Deo vero, polluit ac destruxit eas, *quas ipse sacraverat aras.*" The last expression is a pleasing proof that the venerable monk of Wearmouth was familiar with the poetry of Virgil.

Page 613

——— *'such the inviting voice*
Heard near fresh streams.'

The early propagators of Christianity were accustomed to preach near rivers, for the convenience of baptism.

Page 614. Sonnet XIX

Having spoken of the zeal, disinterestedness, and temperance of the clergy of those times, Bede thus proceeds:—"Unde et in magna erat veneratione tempore illo religionis habitus, itâ ut ubicunque clericus aliquis, aut monachus adveniret, gaudenter ab omnibus tanquam Dei famulus exciperetur. Etiam si in itinere pergens inveniretur, accurrebant, et flexâ cervice, vel manu signari, vel ore illius se benedici, gaudebant. Verbis quoque horum exhortatoriis diligenter auditum præbebant." Lib. iii. cap. 26.

Page 615

'*The people work like congregated bees.*'

See, in Turner's History, vol. iii. p. 528, the account of the erection of Ramsey Monastery. Penances were removable by the performance of acts of charity and benevolence.

Page 615

——'*pain narrows not his cares.*'

Through the whole of his life, Alfred was subject to grievous maladies.

Page 616

'*Woe to the Crown that doth the Cowl obey!*'

The violent measures carried on under the influence of *Dunstan*, for strengthening the Benedictine Order, were a leading cause of the second series of Danish invasions.—*See Turner.*

Page 619

'*Here Man more purely lives,' etc.*

"Bonum est nos hic esse, quia homo vivit purius, cadit rarius, surgit velocius, incedit cautius, quiescit securius, moritur felicius, purgatur citius, præmiatur copiosius."

—Bernard. "This sentence," says Dr. Whitaker, "is usually inscribed in some conspicuous part of the Cistercian houses."

Page 622

'*Whom Obloquy pursues with hideous bark.*'

The list of foul names bestowed upon those poor creatures is long and curious;—and, as is, alas! too natural, most of the opprobrious appellations are drawn from circumstances into which they were forced by their persecutors, who even consolidated their miseries into one reproachful term, calling them Patarenians, or Paturins, from *pati*, to suffer.

"Dwellers with wolves, she names them, for the pine
And green oak are their covert; as the gloom
Of night oft foils their enemy's design,
She calls them Riders on the flying broom
Sorcerers, whose frame and aspect have become
One and the same through practices malign."

Page 623

'*And the green lizard and the gilded newt*
Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.'

These two lines are adopted from a MS., written about the year 1770, which accidentally fell into my possession. The close of the preceding Sonnet on monastic voluptuousness is taken from the same source, as is the verse, "Where Venus sits," etc., and the line, "Once ye were holy, ye are holy still,' in a subsequent Sonnet.

Page 626

'*One (like those prophets whom God sent of old)*
Transfigured,' *etc.*

"M. Latimer suffered his keeper very quietly to pull off his hose, and his other array, which to looke unto was very simple: and being stripped into his shrowd, he seemed as comely a person to them that were present, as one should lightly see: and whereas in his clothes hee appeared a withered and crooked sillie (weak) olde man, he now stood bolt upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold. * * * * Then they brought a faggotte, kindled with fire, and laid the same downe at doctor Ridley's feete. To whome M. Latimer spake in this manner, 'Bee of good comfort, master Ridley, and play the man: wee shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out.'"—*Fox's Acts, etc.*

Similar alterations in the outward figure and deportment of persons brought to like trial were not uncommon. See note to the above passage in Dr. Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Biography, for an example in an humble Welsh fisherman.

Page 627

'*The gift exalting, and with playful smile.*'

"On foot they went, and took Salisbury in their way, purposely to see the good Bishop, who made Mr. Hooker sit at his own table; which Mr. Hooker boasted of with much joy and gratitude when he saw his mother and friends; and at the Bishop's parting with him, the Bishop gave him good counsel and his benediction, but forgot to give him money; which when the Bishop had considered, he sent a servant in all haste to call Richard back to him, and at Richard's return, the Bishop said to him, "Richard, I sent for you back to lend you a horse which hath carried me many a mile, and I thank God with much ease," and presently delivered into his hand a walking-staff, with which he professed he had travelled through many parts of Germany; and he said, "Richard, I do not give, but lend you my horse; be sure you be honest, and bring my horse back to me, at your return this way to Oxford. And I do now give you ten groats to bear your charges to Exeter; and here is ten groats more, which I charge you to deliver to your mother, and tell her I send her a Bishop's benediction with it, and beg the continuance of her prayers for me. And if you bring my horse back to me, I will give you ten groats more to carry you on foot to the college; and so God bless you, good Richard.'—See *Walton's Life of Richard Hooker.*

Page 628

——— '*craftily incites*
The overweening, personates the mad.'

A common device in religious and political conflicts.—See *Strype in support of this instance.*

Page 629

'*Laud.*'

In this age a word cannot be said in praise of Laud, or even in compassion for his fate, without incurring a charge of bigotry; but fearless of such imputation, I concur with Hume, "that it is sufficient for his vindication to observe that his errors were the most excusable of all those which prevailed during that zealous period." A key to the right understanding of those parts of his conduct that brought the most odium upon him in his own time, may be found in the following passage of his speech before the bar of the House of Peers:—"Ever since I came in place, I have laboured nothing more than that the external publick worship of God, so much slighted in divers parts of this kingdom, might be preserved, and that with as much decency and uniformity as might be. For I evidently saw that the public neglect of God's service in the outward face of it, and the nasty lying of many places dedicated to that service, *had almost cast a damp upon the true and inward worship of God, which while we live in the body, needs external helps, and all little enough to keep it in any vigour.*"

Page 632

'*The Pilgrim Fathers.*'

American episcopacy, in union with the church in England, strictly belongs to the general subject; and I here make my acknowledgments to my American friends Bishop Doane, and Mr. Henry Reed of Philadelphia, for having suggested to me the propriety of adverting to it, and pointed out the virtues and intellectual qualities of Bishop White, which so eminently fitted him for the great work he undertook. Bishop White was consecrated at Lambeth, Feb. 4, 1787, by Archbishop Moore; and before his long life was closed, twenty-six bishops had been consecrated in America by himself. For his character and opinions, see his own numerous works, and a "Sermon in commemoration of him, by George Washington Doane, Bishop of New Jersey."

Page 633

'*A genial hearth*———
And a refined rusticity, belong
To the neat mansion.'

Among the benefits arising, as Mr. Coleridge has well observed, from a Church establishment of endowments corresponding with the wealth of the country to which it belongs, may be reckoned as eminently important the examples of civility and refinement which the clergy stationed at intervals afford to the whole people. The established clergy in many parts of England have long been, as they continue to be, the principal bulwark against barbarism, and the link which unites the sequestered peasantry with the intellectual advancement of the age. Nor is it below the dignity of the subject to observe that their taste, as acting upon rural residences and scenery, often furnishes models which country gentlemen, who are more at liberty to follow the caprices of fashion, might profit by. The precincts of an old residence must be treated by ecclesiastics with respect, both from prudence and necessity. I remember being much pleased, some years ago, at Rose Castle, the rural seat of the See of Carlisle, with a style of garden and architecture which, if the place had belonged to a wealthy layman, would no doubt have been swept away. A parsonage house generally stands not far from the church; this proximity imposes favourable restraints, and sometimes suggests an affecting union of the accommodations and elegancies of life with the outward signs of piety and mortality. With pleasure I recall to mind a happy instance of this in the residence of an old and much-valued Friend in Oxfordshire. The house and church stand parallel to each other, at a small distance; a circular lawn, or rather grass-plot, spreads between them; shrubs and trees curve from each side of the dwelling, veiling, but not hiding, the church. From the front of this dwelling no part of the burial-ground is seen; but as you wind by the side of the shrubs towards the steeple-end of the church, the eye catches a single, small, low, monumental headstone, moss-grown, sinking into and gently inclining towards the earth. Advance, and the churchyard, populous and gay with glittering tombstones, opens upon the view. This humble and beautiful parsonage called forth a tribute, for which see the sonnet entitled "A Parsonage in Oxfordshire," p. 607.

Page 637. Sonnet XXXII

This is still continued in many churches in Westmoreland. It takes place in the month of July, when the floor of the stalls is strewn with fresh rushes; and hence it is called the "Rush-bearing."

Page 637

'*Teaching us to forget them or forgive.*'

This is borrowed from an affecting passage in Mr. George Dyer's history of Cambridge.

Page 638

——'*had we, like them, endured*
Sore stress of apprehension.'

See Burnet, who is unusually animated on this subject; the east wind, so anxiously expected and prayed for, was called the "Protestant wind."

Page 639

'*Yet will we not conceal the precious Cross,*
Like men ashamed.'

The Lutherans have retained the Cross within their churches: it is to be regretted that we have not done the same.

Page 640

'*Or like the Alpine Mount, that takes its*
name
From roseate hues,' *etc.*

Some say that Monte Rosa takes its name from a belt of rock at its summit—a very unpoetical and scarcely a probable supposition.

Page 653

————'*more high, the Dacian force,*
To hoof and finger mailed.'

Here and infra, see Forsyth.

Page 654

'*Something less than joy, but more than*
dull content.'

COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA.

Page 658

'*Wild Redbreast,*' *etc.*

This Sonnet, as Poetry, explains itself, yet the scene of the incident having been a wild wood, it may be doubted, as a point of natural history, whether the bird was aware that his attentions were bestowed upon a human, or even a living creature. But a Redbreast will perch upon the foot of a gardener at work, and alight on the handle of the spade when his hand is half upon it—this I have seen. And under my own roof I have witnessed affecting instances of the creature's friendly visits to the chambers of sick persons, as described in the verses to the Redbreast, page 774. One of these welcome intruders used frequently to roost upon a nail in the wall, from which a picture had hung, and was ready, as morning came, to pipe his song in the hearing of the Invalid, who had been long confined to her room. These attachments to a particular person, when marked and continued, used to be reckoned ominous; but the superstition is passing away.

Page 663

'*The Wishing-gate.*'

"In the Vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old high-way leading to Ambleside, is a gate which, time out of mind, has been called the Wishing-gate."

Having been told, upon what I thought good authority, that this gate had been destroyed, and the opening, where it hung, walled up, I gave vent immediately to my feelings in these stanzas. But going to the place some time after, I found, with much delight, my old favourite unmolested.

Page 672

'*Descending to the worm in charity.*'

I am indebted, here, to a passage in one of Mr. Digby's valuable works.

Page 677

'*The Russian Fugitive.*'

Peter Henry Bruce, having given in his entertaining Memoirs the substance of this Tale, affirms that, besides the concurring reports of others, he had the story from the lady's own mouth.

The Lady Catherine, mentioned towards the close, is the famous Catherine, then bearing that name as the acknowledged Wife of Peter the Great.

Page 697

'*Highland Hut.*

This sonnet describes the *exterior* of a Highland hut, as often seen under a morning or evening sunshine. To the authoress of the "Address to the Wind," and other poems, in this volume, who was my fellow-traveller in this tour, I am indebted for the following extract from her journal, which accurately describes, under particular circumstances, the beautiful appearance of the *interior* of one of these rude habitations.

"On our return from the Trosachs the evening began to darken, and it rained so heavily that we were completely wet before we had come two miles, and it was dark when we landed with our boatman, at his hut upon the banks of Loch Katrine. I was faint from cold: the good woman had provided, according to her promise, a better fire than we had found in the morning; and, indeed, when I sat down in the chimney-corner of her smoky biggin, I thought I had never felt more comfortable in my life: a pan of coffee was boiling for us, and having put our clothes in the way of drying, we all sat down thankful for a shelter. We could not prevail upon our boatman, the master of the house, to draw near the fire, though he was cold and wet, or to suffer his wife to get him dry clothes till she had served us, which she did most willingly, though not very expeditiously.

"A Cumberland man of the same rank would not have had such a notion of what was fit and right in his own house, or, if he had, one would have accused him of servility; but in the Highlander it only seemed like politeness (however erroneous and painful to us), naturally growing out of the dependence of the inferiors of the clan upon their laird; he did not, however, refuse to let his wife bring out the whisky bottle for his refreshment, at our request. "She keeps a dram," as the phrase is: indeed, I believe there is scarcely a lonely house by the wayside, in Scotland, where travellers may not be accommodated with a dram. We asked for sugar, butter, barley-bread, and milk: and, with a smile and a stare more of kindness than wonder, she replied, "Ye'll get that," bringing each article separately. We caroused our cups of coffee, laughing like children at the strange atmosphere in which we were: the smoke came in gusts, and spread along the walls; and above our heads in the chimney (where the hens were roosting) it appeared like clouds in the sky. We laughed and laughed again, in spite of the smarting of our eyes, yet had a quieter pleasure in observing the beauty of the beams and rafters gleaming between the clouds of smoke: they had been crusted over and varnished by many winters, till, where the firelight fell upon them, they had become as glossy as black rocks, on a sunny day, cased in ice. When we had eaten our supper we sat about half an hour, and I think I never felt so deeply the blessing of a hospitable welcome and a warm fire. The man of the house repeated from time to time that we should often tell of this night when we got to our homes, and interposed praises of his own lake, which he had more than once, when we were returning in the boat, ventured to say was 'bonnier than Loch Lomond.' Our companion from the Trosachs, who, it appeared, was an Edinburgh drawing-master going, during the vacation, on a pedestrian tour to John O'Groat's House, was to sleep in the barn with my fellow-travellers, where the man said he had plenty of dry hay. I do not believe that the hay of the Highlands is ever very dry, but this year it had a better chance than usual: wet or dry, however, the next morning they said they had slept comfortably. When I went to bed, the mistress, desiring me to '*go ben*,' attended me with a candle, and assured me that the bed was dry, though not 'sic as I had been used to.' It was of chaff; there were two others in the room, a cupboard and two chests, upon one of which stood milk in wooden vessels covered over. The walls of the house were of stone unplastered; it consisted of three apartments, the cow-house at one end, the kitchen or house in the middle, and the spence at the other end; the rooms were divided, not up to the rigging, but only to the beginning of the roof, so that there was a free passage for light and smoke from one end of the house to the other. I went to bed some time before the rest of the family; the door was shut between us, and they had a bright fire, which I could not see, but the light it sent up amongst the varnished rafters and beams, which crossed each other in almost as intricate and fantastic a manner as I have seen the underboughs of a large beech-tree withered by the depth of shade above, produced the most beautiful effect that can be conceived. It was like what I should suppose an underground cave or temple to be with a dripping or moist roof, and the moonlight entering in upon it by some means or other; and yet the colours were more like those of melted gems. I lay looking up till the light of the fire faded away, and the man and his wife and child had crept into their bed at the other end of the room; I did not sleep much, but passed a comfortable night; for my bed, though hard, was warm and clean: the unusualness of my situation prevented me from sleeping. I could hear the waves beat against the shore of the lake; a little rill close to the door made a much louder noise, and, when I sat up in my bed, I could see the lake through an open window-place at the bed's head. Add to this, it rained all night. I was less occupied by remembrance of the Trosachs, beautiful as they were, than the vision of the Highland hut, which I could not get out of my head; I thought of the Faery-land of Spenser, and what I had read in romance at other times; and then what a feast it would be for a London Pantomime-maker could he but transplant it to Drury-lane, with all its beautiful colours!"—*MS.*

Page 698

'*Once on those steeps* I *roamed.*'

The following is from the same MS., and gives an account of the visit to Bothwell Castle here alluded to:

"It was exceedingly delightful to enter thus unexpectedly upon such a beautiful region. The castle stands nobly, overlooking the Clyde. When we came up to it, I was hurt to see that flower-borders had taken place of the natural overgrowings of the ruin, the scattered stones, and wild plants. It is a large and grand pile of red freestone, harmonising perfectly with the rocks of the river, from which, no doubt, it has been hewn. When I was a little accustomed to the unnaturalness of a modern garden, I could not help admiring the excessive beauty and luxuriance of some of the plants, particularly the purple-flowered clematis, and a broad-leafed creeping plant without flowers, which scrambled up the castle wall, along with the ivy, and spread its vine-like branches so lavishly that it seemed to be in its natural situation, and one could not help thinking that, though not self-planted among the ruins of this country, it must somewhere have its native abode in such places. If Bothwell Castle had not been close to the Douglas mansion, we should have been disgusted with the possessor's miserable conception of *adorning* such a venerable ruin; but it is so very near to the house, that of necessity the pleasure-grounds must have extended beyond it, and perhaps the neatness of a shaven lawn, and the complete desolation natural to a ruin, might have made an unpleasing contrast; and, besides being within the precincts of the pleasure-grounds, and so very near to the dwelling of a noble family, it has forfeited, in some degree, its independent majesty, and becomes a tributary to the mansion: its solitude being interrupted, it has no longer the command over the mind in sending it back into past times, or excluding the ordinary feelings which we bear about us in daily life. We had then only to regret that the castle and the house were so near to each other; and it was impossible *not* to regret it; for the ruin presides in state over the river, far from city or town, as if it might have a peculiar privilege to preserve its memorials of past ages, and maintain its own character for centuries to come. We sat upon a bench under the high trees, and had beautiful views of the different reaches of the river, above and below. On the opposite bank, which is finely wooded with elms and other trees, are the remains of a priory built upon a rock; and rock and ruin are so blended, that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. Nothing can be more beautiful than the little remnant of this holy place; elm-trees (for we were near enough to distinguish them by their branches) grow out of the walls, and overshadow a small, but very elegant window. It can scarcely be conceived what a grace the castle and priory impart to each other; and the river Clyde flows on, smooth and unruffled, below, seeming to my thoughts more in harmony with the sober and stately images of former times, than if it had roared over a rocky channel, forcing its sound upon the ear. It blended gently with the warbling of the smaller birds, and the chattering of the larger ones that had made their nests in the ruins. In this fortress the chief of the English nobility were confined after the battle of Bannockburn. If a man *is* to be a prisoner, he scarcely could have a more pleasant place to solace his captivity; but I thought that, for close confinement, I should prefer the banks of a lake, or the seaside. The greatest charm of a brook or river is in the liberty to pursue it through its windings; you can then take it in whatever mood you like; silent or noisy, sportive or quiet. The beauties of a brook or river must be sought, and the pleasure is in going in search of them; those of a lake or of the sea come to you of themselves. These rude warriors cared little, perhaps, about either; and yet, if one may judge from the writings of Chaucer and from the old romances, more interesting passions were connected with natural objects in the days of chivalry than now; though going in search of scenery, as it is called, had not then been thought of. I had previously heard nothing of Bothwell Castle, at least nothing that I remembered; therefore, perhaps, my pleasure was greater, compared with what I received elsewhere, than others might feel."—*MS. Journal.*

Page 699

'Hart's-horn Tree.'

"'In the time of the first Robert de Clifford, in the year 1333 or 1334, Edward Baliol king of Scotland came into Westmoreland, and stayed some time with the said Robert at his castles of Appleby, Brougham, and Pendragon. And during that time they ran a stag by a single greyhound out of Whinfell Park to Redkirk, in Scotland, and back again to this place; where, being both spent, the stag leaped over the pales, but died on the other side; and the greyhound, attempting to leap, fell, and died on the contrary side. In memory of this fact the stag's horns were nailed upon a tree just by, and (the dog being named Hercules) this rhythm was made upon them:

> 'Hercules killed Hart a greese,
> And Hart a greese killed Hercules.'

The tree to this day bears the name of Hart's-horn Tree. The horns in process of time were almost grown over by the growth of the tree, and another pair was put up in their place."—*Nicholson and Burns's History of Westmoreland and Cumberland.*

The tree has now disappeared, but I well remember its imposing appearance as it stood, in a decayed state, by the side of the highroad leading from Penrith to Appleby. This whole neighbourhood abounds in interesting traditions and vestiges of antiquity, viz. Julian's Bower; Brougham and Penrith Castles; Penrith Beacon, and the curious remains in Penrith Churchyard; Arthur's Round Table, and, close by, Maybrough; the excavation, called the Giant's Cave, on the banks of the Emont; Long Meg and her Daughters, near Eden, etc.

Page 712

'But if thou (like Cocytus,' etc.

Many years ago, when I was at Greta

Bridge, in Yorkshire, the hostess of the inn, proud of her skill in etymology, said, that "the name of the river was taken from the *bridge*, the form of which, as every one must notice, exactly resembled a great A." Dr. Whitaker has derived it from the word of common occurrence in the north of England, "*to greet;*" signifying to lament aloud, mostly with weeping: a conjecture rendered more probable from the stony and rocky channel of both the Cumberland and Yorkshire rivers. The Cumberland Greta, though it does not, among the country people, take up *that* name till within three miles of its disappearance in the river Derwent, may be considered as having its source in the mountain cove of Wythburn, and thence flowing through Thirlmere. The beautiful features of that lake are known only to those who, travelling between Grasmere and Keswick, have quitted the main road in the vale of Wythburn, and, crossing over to the opposite side of the lake, have proceeded with it on the right hand.

The channel of the Greta, immediately above Keswick, has, for the purposes of building, been in a great measure cleared of the immense stones which, by their concussion in high floods, produced the loud and awful noises described in the sonnet.

"The scenery upon this river," says Mr. Southey in his Colloquies, "where it passes under the woody side of Latrigg, is of the finest and most rememberable kind:—

> '—— ambiguo lapsu refluitque fluitque,
> Occurrensque sibi venturas aspicit undas.'"

Page 713

'*By hooded Votaresses,' etc.*

Attached to the church of Brigham was formerly a chantry, which held a moiety of the manor; and in the decayed parsonage some vestiges of monastic architecture are still to be seen.

Page 713

'*Mary Queen of Scots landing at Workington.*'

"The fears and impatience of Mary were so great," says Robertson, "that she got into a fisher-boat, and with about twenty attendants landed at Workington, in Cumberland; and thence she was conducted with many marks of respect to Carlisle." The apartment in which the Queen had slept at Workington Hall (where she was received by Sir Henry Curwen as became her rank and misfortunes) was long preserved, out of respect to her memory, as she had left it; and one cannot but regret that some necessary alterations in the mansion could not be effected without its destruction.

Page 713

St. Bees' Heads, anciently called the Cliff of Baruth, are a conspicuous sea-mark for all vessels sailing in the N.E. parts of the Irish Sea. In a bay, one side of which is formed by the southern headland, stands the village of St. Bees; a place distinguished, from very early times, for its religious and scholastic foundations.

"St. Bees," say Nicholson and Burns, "had its name from Bega, an holy woman from Ireland, who is said to have founded here, about the year of our Lord 650, a small monastery, where afterwards a church was built in memory of her.

"The aforesaid religious house, being destroyed by the Danes, was restored by William de Meschiens, son of Ranulph, and brother of Ranulph de Meschiens, first Earl of Cumberland after the Conquest; and made a cell of a prior and six Benedictine monks to the Abbey of St. Mary at York."

Several traditions of miracles, connected with the foundation of the first of these religious houses, survive among the people of the neighbourhood; one of which is alluded to in these Stanzas; and another, of a somewhat bolder and more peculiar character, has furnished the subject of a spirited poem by the Rev. R. Parkinson, M.A., late Divinity Lecturer of St. Bees' College, and now Fellow of the Collegiate Church of Manchester.

After the dissolution of the monasteries, Archbishop Grindal founded a free school at St. Bees, from which the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland have derived great benefit; and recently, under the patronage of the Earl of Lonsdale, a college has been established there for the education of ministers for the English Church. The old Conventual Church has been repaired under the superintendence of the Rev. Dr. Ainger, the Head of the College, and is well worthy of being visited by any strangers who might be led to the neighbourhood of this celebrated spot.

The form of stanza in this Poem, and something in the style of versification, are adopted from the "St. Monica," a poem of much beauty upon a monastic subject, by Charlotte Smith: a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered. She wrote little, and that little unambitiously, but with true feeling for rural nature, at a time when nature was not much regarded by English Poets; for in point of time her earlier writings preceded, I believe, those of Cowper and Burns.

Page 715

'*Are not, in sooth, their Requiems sacred ties.*'

I am aware that I am here treading upon tender ground; but to the intelligent reader I feel that no apology is due. The prayers of survivors, during passionate grief for the recent loss of relatives and friends, as the object of those prayers could no longer be the suffering body of the dying, would naturally be ejaculated for the souls of the departed; the barriers between the two worlds dissolving before the power of love and faith. The ministers of religion, from their habitual attendance upon sick-beds, would be daily witnesses of these benign results; and hence would be strongly tempted to aim at giving to them permanence, by embodying them in rites and ceremonies, recurring at stated periods. All this, as it was in course of nature, so was it blameless, and even praiseworthy; some of its effects, in that rude state of society, could not but be salutary. No reflecting person, however, can view without sorrow the abuses which rose out of thus formalising sublime instincts, and disinterested movements of passion, and perverting them into means of gratifying the ambition and rapacity of the priesthood. But, while we deplore and are indignant at these abuses, it would be a great mistake if we imputed the origin of the offices to prospective selfishness on the part of the monks and clergy: *they* were at first sincere in their sympathy, and in their degree dupes rather of their own creed, than artful and designing men. Charity is, upon the whole, the safest guide that we can take in judging our fellow-men, whether of past ages or of the present time.

Page 717

'*And they are led by noble Hillary.*'

The TOWER OF REFUGE, an ornament to Douglas Bay, was erected chiefly through the humanity and zeal of Sir William Hillary; and he also was the founder of the lifeboat establishment at that place; by which, under his superintendence, and often by his exertions at the imminent hazard of his own life, many seamen and passengers have been saved.

Page 718

'*By a retired Mariner.*'

This unpretending sonnet is by a gentleman nearly connected with me, and I hope, as it falls so easily into its place, that both the writer and the reader will excuse its appearance here.

Page 718

'*Off with yon cloud, old Snafell!*'

The summit of this mountain is well chosen by Cowley as the scene of the "Vision," in which the spectral angel discourses with him concerning the government of Oliver Cromwell. "I found myself," says he, "on the top of that famous hill in the Island Mona, which has the prospect of three great, and not long since most happy, kingdoms. As soon as ever I looked upon them, they called forth the sad representation of all the sins and all the miseries that had overwhelmed them these twenty years." It is not to be denied that the changes now in progress, and the passions, and the way in which they work, strikingly resemble those which led to the disasters the philosophic writer so feelingly bewails. God grant that the resemblance may not become still more striking as months and years advance!

Page 719

'On revisiting Dunolly Castle.'

This ingenious piece of workmanship, as I afterwards learned, had been executed for their own amusement by some labourers employed about the place.

Page 721

'Cave of Staffa.'

The reader may be tempted to exclaim, "How came this and the two following sonnets to be written, after the dissatisfaction expressed in the preceding one?" In fact, at the risk of incurring the reasonable displeasure of the master of the steamboat, I returned to the cave, and explored it under circumstances more favourable to those imaginative impressions which it is so wonderfully fitted to make upon the mind.

Page 722

'Hope smiled when your nativity was cast,
Children of Summer!'

Upon the head of the columns which form the front of the cave rests a body of decomposed basaltic matter, which was richly decorated with that large bright flower, the ox-eyed daisy. I had noticed the same flower growing with profusion among the bold rocks on the western coast of the Isle of Man; making a brilliant contrast with their black and gloomy surfaces.

Page 722

'Iona.'

The four last lines of this sonnet are adopted from a well-known sonnet of Russel, as conveying my feeling better than any words of my own could do.

Page 724

'Yet fetched from Paradise.

It is to be feared that there is more of the poet than the sound etymologist in this derivation of the name Eden. On the western coast of Cumberland is a rivulet which enters the sea at Moresby, known also in the neighbourhood by the name of Eden. May not the latter syllable come from the word Dean, *a valley?* Langdale, near Ambleside, is by the inhabitants called Langden. The former syllable occurs in the name Emont, a principal feeder of the Eden; and the stream which flows, when the tide is out, over Cartmel Sands, is called the Ea—eau, French—aqua, Latin.

Page 725

'Canal, and Viaduct, and Railway, tell!

At Corby, a few miles below Nunnery, the Eden is crossed by a magnificent viaduct; and another of these works is thrown over a deep glen or ravine at a very short distance from the main stream.

Page 725

'A weight of awe, not easy to be borne.'

The daughters of Long Meg, placed in a perfect circle eighty yards in diameter, are seventy-two in number above ground; a little way out of the circle stands Long Meg herself, a single stone, eighteen feet high. When I first saw this monument, as I came on it by surprise, I might overrate its importance as an object; but, though it will not bear a comparison with Stonehenge, I must say, I have not seen any other relique of those dark ages which can pretend to rival it in singularity and dignity of appearance.

Page 726

'To the Earl of Lonsdale.'

This sonnet was written immediately after certain trials which took place at the Cumberland Assizes, when the Earl of Lonsdale, in consequence of repeated and long-continued attacks upon his character through the local press, had thought it right to prosecute the conductors and proprietors of three several journals. A verdict of libel was given in one case; and, in the others, the prosecutions were withdrawn, upon the individuals retracting and disavowing the charges, expressing regret that they had been made, and promising to abstain from the like in future.

Page 739

'From the most gentle creature nursed in fields.

This way of indicating the *name* of my lamented friend has been found fault with; perhaps rightly so; but I may say in justification of the double sense of the word, that similar allusions are not uncommon in epitaphs. One of the best in our language in verse I ever read, was upon a person who bore the name of Palmer; and the course of the thought, throughout, turned upon the Life of the Departed, considered as a pilgrimage. Nor can I think that the objection in the present case will have much force with any one who remembers Charles Lamb's beautiful sonnet addressed to his own name, and ending—

> "No deed of mine shall shame thee, gentle name!"

Page 742

Walter Scott . . .	died Sept. 21, 1832
S. T. Coleridge . .	,, July 25, 1834
Charles Lamb . . .	,, Dec. 27, 1834
Geo. Crabbe . .	,, Feb. 3, 1832
Felicia Hemans . .	,, May 16, 1835

Page 749

'Although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow.'

These words were quoted to me from "Yarrow Unvisited" by Sir Walter Scott when I visited him at Abbotsford, a day or two before his departure for Italy; and the affecting condition in which he was when he looked upon Rome from the Janicular Mount, was reported to me by a lady who had the honour of conducting him thither.

Page 751

'His sepulchral verse.'

If any English reader should be desirous of knowing how far I am justified in thus describing the epitaphs of Chiabrera, he will find translated specimens of them on pages 393-396.

Page 753

'Aquapendente.'

It would be ungenerous not to advert to the religious movement that, since the composition of these verses in 1837, has made itself felt, more or less strongly, throughout the English Church;—a movement that takes, for its first principle, a devout deference to the voice of Christian antiquity. It is not my office to pass judgment on questions of theological detail; but my own repugnance to the spirit and system of Romanism has been so repeatedly and, I trust, feelingly expressed, that I shall not be suspected of a leaning that way, if I do not join in the grave charge, thrown out, perhaps in the heat of controversy, against the learned and pious men to whose labours I allude. I speak apart from controversy; but, with strong faith in the moral temper which would elevate the present by doing reverence to the past, I would draw cheerful auguries for the English Church from this movement, as likely to restore among us a tone of piety more earnest and real than that produced by the mere formalities of the understanding, refusing, in a degree which I cannot but lament, that its own temper and judgment shall be controlled by those of antiquity.

Page 753

Within a couple of hours of my arrival at Rome, I saw from Monte Pincio the Pine tree as described in the Sonnet; and, while expressing admiration at the beauty of its appearance, I was told by an acquaintance of my fellow-traveller, who happened to join us at the moment, that a price had been paid for it by the late Sir G. Beaumont, upon condition that the proprietor should not act upon his known intention of cutting it down.

Page 758

'Camaldoli.'

This famous sanctuary was the original establishment of Saint Romualdo, (or Rumwald, as our ancestors Saxonised the name) in the 11th century, the ground (campo) being given by Count Maldo. The Camaldolensi, however, have spread wide as a branch of Benedictines, and may therefore be classed among the *gentlemen* of the monastic orders. The society comprehends two orders, monks and hermits; symbolised by their arms, two doves drinking out of the same cup. The monastery in which the monks here reside is beautifully situated, but a large unattractive edifice, not unlike a factory. The hermitage is placed in a loftier and wider region of the forest. It comprehends between twenty and thirty distinct residences, each including for its single hermit an inclosed piece of ground and three very small apartments. There are days of indulgence when the hermit may quit his cell, and when old age arrives he descends from the mountain and takes his abode among the monks.

My companion had in the year 1831 fallen in with the monk, the subject of these two sonnets, who showed him his abode among the hermits. It is from him that I received the following particulars. He was then about forty years of age, but his appearance was that of an older man. He had been a painter by profession, but on taking orders changed his name from Santi to Raffaello, perhaps with an unconscious reference as well to the great Sanzio d'Urbino as to the archangel. He assured my friend that he had been thirteen years in the hermitage and had never known melancholy or ennui. In the little recess for study and prayer, there was a small collection of books. "I read only," said he, "books of asceticism and mystical theology." On being asked the names of the most famous mystics, he enumerated *Scaramelli*, *San Giovanni della Croce*, *St. Dionysius the Areopagite* (supposing the work which bears his name to be really his), and with peculiar emphasis *Ricardo di San Vittori*. The works of *Saint Theresa* are also in high repute among ascetics. These names may interest some of my readers.

We heard that Raffaello was then living in the convent; my friend sought in vain to renew his acquaintance with him. It was probably a day of seclusion. The reader will perceive that these sonnets were supposed to be written when he was a young man.

Page 758

' *What aim had they, the Pair of Monks.*'

In justice to the Benedictines of Camaldoli, by whom strangers are so hospitably entertained, I feel obliged to notice that I saw among them no other figures at all resembling, in size and complexion, the two monks described in this Sonnet. What was their office, or the motive which brought them to this place of mortification, which they could not have approached without being carried in this or some other way, a feeling of delicacy prevented me from inquiring. An account has before been given of the hermitage they were about to enter. It was visited by us towards the end of the month of May; yet snow was lying thick under the pine-trees, within a few yards of the gate.

Page 759

' *At Vallombrosa.*'

The name of Milton is pleasingly connected with Vallombrosa in many ways. The pride with which the monk, without any previous question from me, pointed out his residence, I shall not readily forget. It may be proper here to defend the Poet from a charge which has been brought against him, in respect to the passage in "Paradise Lost," where this place is mentioned. It is said, that he has erred in speaking of the trees there being deciduous, whereas they are, in fact, pines. The fault-finders are themselves mistaken; the *natural* woods of the region of Vallombrosa *are* deciduous, and spread to a great extent; those near the convent are, indeed, mostly pines; but they are avenues of trees *planted* within a few steps of each other, and thus composing large tracts of wood; plots of which are periodically cut down. The appearance of those narrow avenues, upon steep slopes open to the sky, on account of the height which the trees attain by being *forced* to grow upwards, is often very impressive. My guide, a boy of about fourteen years old, pointed this out to me in several places.

Page 766

' *All change is perilous, and all chance*
unsound.'

SPENSER.

Page 776

'*Men of the Western World.*'

These lines were written several years ago, when reports prevailed of cruelties committed in many parts of America, by men making a law of their own passions. A far more formidable, as being a more deliberate mischief, has appeared among those States, which have lately broken faith with the public creditor in a manner so infamous. I cannot, however, but look at both evils under a similar relation to inherent good, and hope that the time is not distant when our brethren of the West will wipe off this stain from their name and nation.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

I am happy to add that this anticipation is already partly realised; and that the reproach addressed to the Pennsylvanians in the sonnet on page 790 is no longer applicable to them. I trust that those other States to which it may yet apply will soon follow the example now set them by Philadelphia, and redeem their credit with the world.—1850.

Page 779

'*The Norman boy.*'

"Among ancient Trees there are few, I believe, at least in France, so worthy of attention as an Oak which may be seen in the 'Pays de Caux,' about a league from Yvetot, close to the church, and in the burial-ground of Allonville.

"The height of this Tree does not answer to its girth; the trunk, from the roots to the summit, forms a complete cone; and the inside of this cone is hollow throughout the whole of its height.

"Such is the Oak of Allonville in its state of nature. The hand of Man, however, has endeavoured to impress upon it a character still more interesting, by adding a religious feeling to the respect which its age naturally inspires.

"The lower part of its hollow trunk has been transformed into a Chapel of six or seven feet in diameter, carefully wainscoted and paved, and an open iron gate guards the humble Sanctuary.

"Leading to it there is a staircase, which twists round the body of the Tree. At certain seasons of the year divine service is performed in this Chapel.

"The summit has been broken off many years, but there is a surface at the top of the trunk, of the diameter of a very large tree, and from it rises a pointed roof, covered with slates, in the form of a steeple, which is surmounted with an iron Cross, that rises in a picturesque manner from the middle of the leaves, like an ancient Hermitage above the surrounding Wood.

"Over the entrance to the Chapel an Inscription appears, which informs us it was erected by the Abbé du Détroit, Curate of Allonville in the year 1696; and over a door is another, dedicating it 'To Our Lady of Peace.'"

Vide 14 *No. Saturday Magazine.*

APPENDIX, PREFACES,

ETC. ETC

MUCH the greatest part of the foregoing Poems has been so long before the Public that no prefatory matter, explanatory of any portion of them or of the arrangement which has been adopted, appears to be required; and had it not been for the observations contained in those Prefaces upon the principles of Poetry in general, they would not have been reprinted even as an Appendix in this Edition.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION OF SEVERAL OF THE FOREGOING POEMS, PUBLISHED, WITH AN ADDITIONAL VOLUME, UNDER THE TITLE OF "LYRICAL BALLADS"

Note.—In succeeding Editions, when the Collection was much enlarged and diversified, this Preface was transferred to the end of the Volumes as having little of a special application to their contents.

The first Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published as an experiment, which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that a greater number have been pleased than I ventured to hope I should please.

* * * *

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems, from a belief that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realised, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the quality and in the multiplicity of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory upon which the Poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, knowing that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because adequately to display the opinions, and fully to enforce the arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate to a preface. For, to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence of which it is susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined without pointing out in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible that there would be something like impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus apprises the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country, in the age of Shakspeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which, by the act of writing in verse, an Author in the present day makes to his reader; but it will undoubtedly appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. I hope, therefore, the reader will not censure me for attempting to state what I have proposed to myself to perform; and also (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from one of the most dishonourable accusations which can be brought against an Author; namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained, prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems, was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust), because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes and fickle appetites of their own creation.[1]

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived, but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*. If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and as, by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these Poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling. . . . .

A sense of false modesty shall not prevent me from asserting that the Reader's attention is pointed to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakspeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavour made in these volumes to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and were there not added to this impression a belief that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

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[1] It is worth while here to observe that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style*, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not having performed what I never attempted. The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes, and are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Others who pursue a different track will interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, but wish to prefer a claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men; and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject; consequently there is, I hope, in these Poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense: but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of

Milton himself. To illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who, by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

"In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.
These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain."

It will easily be perceived, that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics; it is equally obvious that, except in the rhyme and in the use of the single word "fruitless" for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

By the foregoing quotation it has been shown that the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and it was previously asserted that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose. We will go further. It may be safely affirmed that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry[1] sheds no tears "such as Angels weep," but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of Prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what has just been said on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of Prose, and paves the way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the language of such Poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters: it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments; for, if the Poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions, the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect if, upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

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[1] I here use the word "Poetry" (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Matter of Fact, or Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre; nor is this, in truth, a *strict* antithesis, because lines and passages of metre so naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable.

But, as the pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems now presented to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and as it is in itself of high importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labour is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, such persons may be reminded that, whatever be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments concerning the works of the greatest Poets, both ancient and modern, will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise and when we censure: and our moral feelings influencing and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask, what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him?—He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:—whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious that, while he describes and imitates passions, his employment is in some degree mechanical compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and the more industriously he applies this principle the deeper will be his faith that no words, which *his* fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who does not scruple to substitute excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry, as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will convers with us as gravely about a *taste* for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontiniac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who comprehends the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian, there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathise with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure, which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature, with affections akin to those which, through labour and length of time, the Man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakspeare hath said of man, "that he looks before and after." He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of Men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarised to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.—It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

What has been thus far said applies to Poetry in general, but especially to those parts of compositions where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; and upon this point it appears to authorise the conclusion that there are few persons of good sense who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are coloured by a diction of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet or belonging simply to Poets in general; to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their compositions being in metre, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language; but still it may be proper and necessary where the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring the Reader to the description before given of a Poet. Among the qualities there enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what was said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men and the objects which interest them. The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly? It might be *proved* that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless, therefore, we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height; and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that while he is only selecting from the real language of men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. Our feelings are the same with respect to metre; for, as it may be proper to remind the Reader, the distinction of metre is regular and uniform, and not, like that which is produced by what is usually called POETIC DICTION, arbitrary, and subject to infinite caprices, upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case, the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet, respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion; whereas, in the other, the metre obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, Why, professing these opinions, have I written in verse? To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what has been already said, I reply, in the first place, Because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose or verse; the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature before me—to supply endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, supposing for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why should I be condemned for attempting to superadd to such description the charm which, by the consent of all nations, is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this, by such as are yet unconvinced, it may be answered that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre, unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that, by such deviation, more will be lost from the shock which will thereby be given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who still contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly under-rate the power of metre in itself, it might, perhaps, as far as relates to these Volumes, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a still more naked and simple style, which have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and, what I wished *chiefly* to attempt, at present, was to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who proves the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure; but, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not, in that state, succeed each other in accustomed order. If the words, however, by which this excitement is produced be in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true; and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose. The metre of the old ballads is very artless, yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion; and, I hope, if the following poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found in them. This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the reperusal of the distressful parts of "Clarissa Harlowe," or the "Gamester"; while Shakspeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us, as pathetic, beyond the bounds of pleasure—an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement.—On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen), if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then (unless the Poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious), in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a SYSTEMATIC defence of the theory here maintained, it would have been my duty to develop the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; namely, the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude, are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not be a useless employment to apply this principle to the consideration of metre, and to show that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to point out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of re-action, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If Nature be thus cautious to preserve in a state of enjoyment a being so employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take care that, whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an over-balance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely—all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. All that it is *necessary* to say, however, upon this subject, may be effected by affirming, what few persons will deny, that of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

Having thus explained a few of my reasons for writing in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and for this reason a few words shall be added with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, I may have sometimes written upon unworthy subjects; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words and phrases from which no man can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no doubt that, in some instances, feelings, even of the ludicrous, may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of an author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support; and, if he set them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind shall lose all confidence in itself, and become utterly debilitated. To this it may be added, that the critic ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the Poet, and, perhaps, in a much greater degree: for there can be no presumption in saying of most readers, that it is not probable they will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and, above all, since they are so much less interested in the subject, they may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as the reader has been detained, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to poetry, in which the language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies, of which Dr. Johnson's stanza is a fair specimen:—

"I put my hat upon my head
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand."

Immediately under these lines let us place one of the most justly-admired stanzas of the *Babes in the Wood.*

"These pretty Babes with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town."

In both these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are words in both, for example, "the Strand," and "the Town," connected with none but the most familiar ideas; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference? Not from the metre, not from the language, not from the order of the words; but the *matter* expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses, to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism, is not to say, this is a bad kind of poetry, or, this is not poetry; but, this wants sense; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can *lead* to anything interesting; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader. This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses. Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus? Why take pains to prove that an ape is not a Newton, when it is self-evident that he is not a man?

One request I must make of my Reader, which is, that in judging these Poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others. How common is it to hear a person say, I myself do not object to this style of composition, or this or that expression, but to such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous! This mode of criticism, so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment, is almost universal: let the Reader then abide, independently, by his own feelings, and, if he finds himself affected, let him not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author, by any single composition, has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption that on other occasions where we have been displeased he, nevertheless, may not have written ill or absurdly; and further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce, in a high degree, to the improvement of our own taste: for an *accurate* taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long-continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned, not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself), but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that, if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous; and that, in many cases, it necessarily will be so.

Nothing would, I know, have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view, as to have shown of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavoured to recommend: for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition; and what more can be done for him? The power of any art is limited; and he will suspect that, if it be proposed to furnish him with new friends, that can be only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honourable bigotry, for the objects which have long continued to please them: we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is in these feelings enough to resist a host of arguments; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, many obstacles might have been removed, and the Reader assisted in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible for poetry to give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of the subject has not been altogether neglected, but it has not been so much my present aim to prove, that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, as to offer reasons for presuming that if my purpose were fulfilled, a species of poetry would be produced which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I had in view: he will determine how far it has been attained, and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining: and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the Public.

APPENDIX

See page 857—"by what is usually called POETIC DICTION."

PERHAPS, as I have no right to expect that attentive perusal, without which, confined, as I have been, to the narrow limits of a preface, my meaning cannot be thoroughly understood, I am anxious to give an exact notion of the sense in which the phrase poetic diction has been used; and for this purpose, a few words shall here be added, concerning the origin and characteristics of the phraseology which I have condemned under that name.

The earliest poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative. In succeeding times, Poets, and Men ambitious of the fame of Poets, perceiving the influence of such language, and desirous of producing the same effect without being animated by the same passion, set themselves to a mechanical adoption of these figures of speech, and made use of them, sometimes with propriety, but much more frequently applied them to feelings and thoughts with which they had no natural connection whatsoever. A language was thus insensibly produced, differing materially from the real language of men in *any situation*. The Reader or Hearer of this distorted language found himself in a perturbed and unusual state of mind: when affected by the genuine language of passion he had been in a perturbed and unusual state of mind also: in both cases he was willing that his common judgment and understanding should be laid asleep, and he had no instinctive and infallible perception of the true to make him reject the false; the one served as a passport for the other. The emotion was in both cases delightful, and no wonder if he confounded the one with the other, and believed them both to be produced by the same or similar causes. Besides, the Poet spake to him in the character of a man to be looked up to, a man of genius and authority. Thus, and from a variety of other causes, this distorted language was received with admiration; and Poets, it is probable, who had before contented themselves for the most part with misapplying only expressions which at first had been dictated by real passion, carried the abuse still further, and introduced phrases composed apparently in the spirit of the original figurative language of passion, yet altogether of their own invention, and characterised by various degress of wanton deviation from good sense and nature.

It is indeed true that the language of the earliest Poets was felt to differ materially from ordinary language, because it was the language of extraordinary occasions; but it was really spoken by men, language which the Poet himself had uttered when he had been affected by the events which he described, or which he had heard uttered by those around him. To this language it is probable that metre of some sort or other was early superadded. This separated the genuine language of Poetry still further from common life, so that whoever read or heard the poems of these earliest Poets felt himself moved in a way in which he had not been accustomed to be moved in real life, and by causes manifestly different from those which acted upon him in real life. This was the great temptation to all the corruptions which have followed: under the protection of this feeling succeeding Poets constructed a phraseology which had one thing, it is true, in common with the genuine language of poetry, namely, that it was not heard in ordinary conversation; that it was unusual. But the first Poets, as I have said, spake a language which, though unusual, was still the language of men. This circumstance, however, was disregarded by their successors; they found that they could please by easier means: they became proud of modes of expression which they themselves had invented, and which were uttered only by themselves. In process of time metre became a symbol or promise of this unusual language, and whoever took upon him to write in metre, according as he possessed more or less of true poetic genius, introduced less or more of this adulterated phraseology into his compositions, and the true and the false were inseparably interwoven until, the taste of men becoming gradually perverted, this language was received as a natural language, and at length, by the influence of books upon men, did to a certain degree really become so. Abuses of this kind were imported from one nation to another, and with the progress of refinement this diction became daily more and more corrupt, thrusting out of sight the plain humanities of nature by a motley masquerade of tricks, quaintnesses, hieroglyphics, and enigmas.

It would not be uninteresting to point out the causes of the pleasure given by this extravagant and absurd diction. It depends upon a great variety of causes, but upon none, perhaps, more than its influence in impressing a notion of the peculiarity and exaltation of the Poet's character, and in flattering the Reader's self-love by bringing him nearer to a sympathy with that character; an effect which is accomplished by unsettling ordinary habits of thinking, and thus assisting the Reader to approach to that perturbed and dizzy state of mind in which if he does not find himself, he imagines that he is *balked* of a peculiar enjoyment which poetry can and ought to bestow.

The sonnet quoted from Gray in the Preface, except the lines printed in Italics, consists of little else but this diction, though not of the worst kind; and indeed, if one may be permitted to say so, it is far too common in the best writers, both ancient and modern. Perhaps in no way, by positive example, could more easily be given a notion of what I mean by the phrase *poetic diction* than by referring to a comparison between the metrical paraphrase which we have of passages in the Old and New Testament, and those passages as they exist in our common Translation. See Pope's "Messiah" throughout; Prior's "Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue," etc. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels," etc. 1st Corinthians, chap. xiii. By way of immediate example, take the following of Dr. Johnson:—

Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes,
Observe her labours, Sluggard, and be wise;
No stern command, no monitory voice,
Prescribes her duties, or directs her choice;
Yet, timely provident, she hastes away

To snatch the blessings of a plenteous day;
When fruitful Summer loads the teeming plain,
She crops the harvest, and she stores the grain.
How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours,
Unnerve thy vigour, and enchain thy powers?
While artful shades thy downy couch enclose,
And soft solicitation courts repose,
Amidst the drowsy charms of dull delight,
Year chases year with unremitted flight,
Till Want now following, fraudulent and slow,
Shall spring to seize thee, like an ambush'd foe.

From this hubbub of words pass to the original. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." Proverbs, chap. vi.

One more quotation, and I have done. It is from Cowper's Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk:—

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I must visit no more.
My Friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

This passage is quoted as an instance of three different styles of composition. The first four lines are poorly expressed; some Critics would call the language prosaic; the fact is, it would be bad prose, so bad, that it is scarcely worse in metre. The epithet "church-going" applied to a bell, and that by so chaste a writer as Cowper, is an instance of the strange abuses which Poets have introduced into their language, till they and their Readers take them as matters of course, if they do not single them out expressly as objects of admiration. The two lines "Ne'er sighed at the sound," etc., are, in my opinion, an instance of the language of passion wrested from its proper use, and, from the mere circumstance of the composition being in metre, applied upon an occasion that does not justify such violent expressions; and I should condemn the passage, though perhaps few Readers will agree with me, as vicious poetic diction. The last stanza is throughout admirably expressed: it would be equally good whether in prose or verse, except that the Reader has an exquisite pleasure in seeing such natural language so naturally connected with metre. The beauty of this stanza tempts me to conclude with a principle which ought never to be lost sight of, and which has been my chief guide in all I have said,—namely, that in works *of imagination and sentiment*, for of these only have I been treating, in proportion as ideas and feelings are valuable, whether the composition be in prose or in verse, they require and exact one and the same language. Metre is but adventitious to composition, and the phraseology for which that passport is necessary, even where it may be graceful at all, will be little valued by the judicious.

ESSAY, SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE PREFACE

WITH the young of both sexes, Poetry is, like love, a passion; but, for much the greater part of those who have been proud of its power over their minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the pleasing bondage; or it relaxes of itself;—the thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, or the time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes only an occasional recreation, while to those whose existence passes away in a course of fashionable pleasure, it is a species of luxurious amusement. In middle and declining age, a scattered number of serious persons resort to poetry, as to religion, for a protection against the pressure of trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life. And, lastly, there are many who, having been enamoured of this art in their youth, have found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate general literature; in which poetry has continued to be comprehended *as a study*.

Into the above classes the Readers of poetry may be divided; Critics abound in them all; but from the last only can opinions be collected of absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. The young, who in nothing can escape delusion, are especially subject to it in their intercourse with Poetry. The cause, not so obvious as the fact is unquestionable, is the same as that from which erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of men of all ages, chiefly proceed; but upon Youth it operates with peculiar force. The appropriate business of poetry (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science), her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear;* not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses*, and to the *passions*. What a world of delusion does this acknowledged obligation prepare for the inexperienced! what temptations to go astray are here held forth for them whose thoughts have been little disciplined by the understanding, and whose feelings revolt from the sway of reason!—When a juvenile Reader is in the height of his rapture with some vicious passage, should experience throw in doubts, or common sense suggest suspicions, a lurking consciousness that the realities of the Muse are but shows, and that her liveliest excitements are raised by transient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive assemblages of contradictory thoughts—is ever at hand to justify extravagance, and to sanction absurdity. But, it may be asked, as these illusions are unavoidable, and, no doubt, eminently useful to the mind as a process, what good can be gained by making observations, the tendency of which is to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings, and thus to abridge its innocent and even profitable pleasures? The reproach implied in the question could not be warded off, if Youth were incapable of being delighted with what is truly excellent; or if these errors always terminated of themselves in due season. But, with the majority, though their force be abated, they continue through life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious an element to be extinguished or damped by a philosophical remark; and, while there is no danger that what has been said will be injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident, it may prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic, are, at the same time, modest and ingenuous. The intimation may unite with their own misgivings to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner than it would otherwise have arrived, a more discreet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in later life, whose understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and so far imposed upon when they happen to take up a new work in verse, this appears to be the cause;—that, having discontinued their attention to poetry, whatever progress may have been made in other departments of knowledge, they have not, as to this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If, then, a new poem fall in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled; and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life. As they read, powers seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The Book was probably taken up after an escape from the burden of business, and with a wish to forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

If Men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagances, and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such Readers will resemble their former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style. In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments. But it is a well-known property of human nature, that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious with various degrees of distinctness. Is it not, then, inevitable (confining these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such Readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original Work, the colouring of which is disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony? It is in the fine arts as in the affairs of life, no man can *serve* (*i.e.* obey with zeal and fidelity) two Masters.

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion, they who have learned to perceive this truth, and who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes, must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the two Classes of Readers, whom we have been considering, are liable. But as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly; and its sympathies become so exclusive that many species of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite, its notice. Besides, men who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to the truths which interest them, they are prone to over-rate the Authors by whom those truths are expressed and enforced. They come prepared to impart so much passion to the Poet's language, that they remain unconscious how little, in fact, they received from it. And, on the other hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tremendous consequences, that, if opinions touching upon religion occur which the Reader condemns, he not only cannot sympathise with them, however animated the expression, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is converted into dislike; and the heart of the Reader is set against the Author and his book.—To these excesses they, who from their professions ought to be the most guarded against them, are perhaps the most liable; I mean those sects whose religion, being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity, the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest faculty of our nature, what can be expected but contradictions? Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemptuous; at another, being troubled, as they are and must be, with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious;—and at all seasons they are under temptations to supply, by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity:—the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence, and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an "imperfect shadowing forth" of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols. The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the Infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinity between religion and poetry; between religion—making up the deficiencies of reason by faith; and poetry—passionate for the instruction of reason; between religion—whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circumscription, and reconciled to substitutions; and poetry—ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation. In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error;—so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion than that species, the argument and scope of which is religious; and no lovers of the art have gone farther astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value? For a mind at once poetical and philosophical; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government? Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb? For a natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing anything of its quickness; and for active faculties, capable of answering the demands which an Author of original imagination shall make upon them, associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it?—among those and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of poetry to remit much of its force, have applied to the consideration of the laws of this art the best power of their understandings. At the same time it must be observed that, as this Class comprehends the only judgments which are trustworthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For to be mistaught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this Class are contained censors, who, if they be pleased with what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles; who, should they generalise rightly to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end; who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield to one of higher order. In it are found critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; men, who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany,—confounded if he turn quick upon the wing, dismayed if he soar steadily "into the region;"—men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is languid, who therefore feed as the many direct them, or, with the many, are greedy after vicious provocatives;—judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise ominous! In this class meet together the two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and, were it only on this account, I would invite the reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of judges who can be confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits, must have been the fate of most works in the higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them: it will be further found, that when Authors shall have at length raised themselves into general admiration and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed concerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore; if they were not recompensed by perceiving that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which owes its being to the struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes;—a vivacious quality, ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the poetical literature of this Country for the greater part of the last two centuries, and see if the facts support these inferences.

Who is there that now reads the

"Creation" of Dubartas? Yet all Europe once resounded with his praise; he was caressed by kings; and, when his Poem was translated into our language, the Faery Queen faded before it. The name of Spenser, whose genius is of a higher order than even that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely known beyond the limits of the British Isles. And if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his countrymen, compared with that which they bestow on those of some other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed.

> "The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
> And poets *sage*"—

are his own words; but his wisdom has, in this particular, been his worst enemy: while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been *their* best friend. But he was a great power, and bears a high name: the laurel has been awarded to him.

A dramatic Author, if he write for the stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakspeare was listened to. The people were delighted; but I am not sufficiently versed in stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary Authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards. Had there been a formal contest for superiority among dramatic writers, that Shakspeare, like his predecessors Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry competitors, becomes too probable, when we reflect that the admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in a later age, as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent, as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shakspeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the Players, for the gratification of the many?

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception upon the stage, made but little impression upon the ruling Intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, nowhere either quotes or alludes to him.[1]—His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the Restoration; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of Shakspeare's. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his Edition of the Plays, with a view of rendering to the general reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice.

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation: "the English, with their bouffon de Shakspeare," is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French Theatre; an advantage which the Parisian critic owed to his German blood and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakspeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet: for among us it is a current, I might say an established opinion, that Shakspeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be "a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties." How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakspeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature!

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[1] The learned Hakewill (a third edition of whose book bears date 1635), writing to refute the error "touching Nature's perpetual and universal decay," cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Bartas, and Spenser, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated; but he makes no mention of Shakspeare.

There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous poems, in which Shakspeare expresses his own feelings in his own person. It is not difficult to conceive that the Editor, George Steevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that Volume, the Sonnets; though in no part of the writings of this Poet is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the Critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an[1] act of parliament not being strong enough to compel the perusal of those little pieces, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in them: and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration, as an inmate of the celestial regions—"there sitting where he durst not soar."

Nine years before the death of Shakspeare, Milton was born; and early in life he published several small poems, which, though on their first appearance they were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree, that Pope in his youth could borrow from them without risk of its being known. Whether these poems are at this day justly appreciated, I will not undertake to decide: nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of readers to suppose the contrary; seeing that a man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the translation made by him of the most popular of those pieces. At all events, it is certain that these Poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised; yet were they little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication; and of the Sonnets, Dr. Johnson, as appears from Boswell's Life of him, was in the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Steevens wrote upon those of Shakspeare.

About the time when the Pindaric odes of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious thinkers whom Dr. Johnson has strangely styled metaphysical Poets, were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, the Paradise Lost made its appearance. "Fit audience find though few," was the petition addressed by the Poet to his inspiring Muse. I have said elsewhere that he gained more than he asked; this I believe to be true; but Dr. Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's Countrymen were "*just* to it" upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred Copies were sold in two years; an uncommon example, he asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But, be it remembered that, if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which he announced them, had raised him many enemies, they had procured him numerous friends; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the master-work of a man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. Take, from the number of purchasers, persons of this class, and also those who wished to possess the Poem as a religious work, and but few, I fear, would be left who sought for it on account of its poetical merits. The demand did not immediately increase; "for," says Dr. Johnson, "many more readers" (he means persons in the habit of reading poetry) "than were supplied at first the Nation did not afford." How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title-pages to belie it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, seventh edition, 1681. A book near it is Flatman's Poems, fourth edition, 1686; Waller, fifth edition, same date. The Poems of Norris of Bemerton not long after went, I believe, through nine editions. What further demand there might be for these works I do not know; but I well remember that, twenty-five years ago, the booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley. This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable man; but merely to show that, if Milton's work were not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. The early editions of the Paradise Lost were printed in a shape which allowed them to be sold at a low price, yet only three thousand copies of the Work were sold in eleven years; and the Nation, says Dr. Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the Works of Shakspeare, which probably did not together make one thousand Copies; facts adduced by the critic to prove the "paucity of Readers."—There were readers in multitudes; but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorized, then, to affirm that the reception of the Paradise Lost, and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions which I am attempting to establish are not erroneous.[1]—How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a Wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the Miscellanies or trading Journalist of King William's time, would have brought forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this Poem, everywhere impregnated with *original* excellence.

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[1] This flippant insensibility was publicly reprehended by Mr. Coleridge in a course of Lectures upon Poetry given by him at the Royal Institution. For the various merits of thought and language in Shakspeare's Sonnets see Numbers 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 54, 64, 66, 68, 73, 76, 86, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 129, and many others.

So strange indeed are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles[2] in human nature for this art to rest upon. I have been honoured by being permitted to peruse in MS. a tract composed between the period of the Revolution and the close of that century. It is the Work of an English Peer of high accomplishments, its object to form the character and direct the studies of his son. Perhaps nowhere does a more beautiful treatise of the kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are throughout equally conspicuous. Yet the Author, selecting among the Poets of his own country those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal, particularises only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same time, Shaftesbury, an author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet lisping in their cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English Poet ever attained during his life-time, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them, that the undue exertion of those arts is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature, to which, if he had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Eclogues with boyish inexperience, the praise which these compositions obtained tempted him into a belief that Nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral Poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those Eclogues, which their author intended to be burlesque. The instigator of the work, and his admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these Poems contain some detestable passages, the effect, as Dr. Johnson well observes, "of reality and truth became conspicuous even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded." The Pastorals, ludicrous to such as prided themselves upon their refinement, in spite of those disgusting passages, "became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations."

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[1] Hughes is express upon this subject: in his dedication of Spenser's Works to Lord Somers, he writes thus: "It was your Lordship's encouraging a beautiful Edition of Paradise Lost that first brought that incomparable Poem to be generally known and esteemed."

[2] This opinion seems actually to have been entertained by Adam Smith, the worst critic, David Hume not excepted, that Scotland, a soil to which this sort of weed seems natural, has produced.

Something less than sixty years after the publication of the Paradise Lost appeared Thomson's Winter; which was speedily followed by his other Seasons. It is a work of inspiration; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? "It was no sooner read," says one of his contemporary biographers, "than universally admired: those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for anything in poetry, beyond a *point* of satirical or epigrammatic wit, a smart *antithesis* richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an *elegiac* complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing anything new and original. These were somewhat mortified to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a poet, who seemed to owe nothing but to nature and his own genius. But, in a short time, the applause became unanimous; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions too, the overflowings of a tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less; leaving him in doubt, whether he should more admire the Poet or love the Man."

This case appears to bear strongly against us:—but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration. The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year: and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a Poet. Now it is remarkable that, excepting the nocturnal Reverie of Lady Winchilsea, and a passage or two in the Windsor Forest of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the Paradise Lost and the Seasons does not contain a single new image of external nature, and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moonlight scene in the Iliad. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic, and senseless;[1] those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation,—nay, there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an enthusiast, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity!—If these two distinguished writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a poet, that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those passages of the elder poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of nature, were not at that time holden in

[1] CORTES *alone in a night-gown.*

All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead;
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head.
The little Birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping Flowers beneath the Night-dew sweat:
Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eyes.
DRYDEN'S *Indian Emperor.*

much estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to those appearances.

Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance; and as the soil was *in such good condition* at the time of the publication of the Seasons, the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired poet, but he could not work miracles; in cases where the art of seeing had in some degree been learned, the teacher would further the proficiency of his pupils, but he could do little *more;* though so far does vanity assist men in acts of self-deception, that many would often fancy they recognised a likeness when they knew nothing of the original. Having shown that much of what his biographer deemed genuine admiration must in fact have been blind wonderment—how is the rest to be accounted for?—Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one: in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental commonplaces that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used copy of the Seasons the book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories (perhaps Damon and Musidora); these also are prominent in our collections of Extracts, and are the parts of his Work which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice. Pope, repaying praises which he had received, and wishing to extol him to the highest, only styles him "an elegant and philosophical Poet;" nor are we able to collect any unquestionable proofs that the true characteristics of Thomson's genius as an imaginative poet[1] were perceived, till the elder Warton, almost forty years after the publication of the Seasons, pointed them out by a note in his Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope. In the Castle of Indolence (of which Gray speaks so coldly) these characteristics were almost as conspicuously displayed, and in verse more harmonious and diction more pure. Yet that fine poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day the delight only of a few!

When Thomson died, Collins breathed forth his regrets in an Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon *him* who should regard with insensibility the place where the Poet's remains were deposited. The Poems of the mourner himself have now passed through innumerable editions, and are universally known; but if, when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notice which his poems attained during his life-time was so small, and of course the sale so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the edition into the fire.

Next in importance to the Seasons of Thomson, though at considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed by the Editor, Dr. Percy. This work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales that appeared not long after its publication; and had been modelled, as the authors persuaded themselves, after the old Ballad. The Compilation was however ill suited to the then existing taste of city society; and Dr. Johnson, 'mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their ill-imitated models sank, in this country, into temporary neglect; while Bürger, and other able writers of Germany, were translating or imitating these Reliques, and composing, with the aid of inspiration thence derived, poems which are the delight of the German nation. Dr. Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of Sir Cauline and by many other pieces), yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the Hermit of Warkworth, a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact[1] with regret, esteeming the genius of Dr. Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom in modern times it has been cultivated. That even Bürger (to whom Klopstock gave in my hearing a commendation which he denied to Goethe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine poet, and one of the few among the Germans whose works would last) had not the fine sensibility of Percy, might be shown from many passages, in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example,

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[1] Since these observations upon Thomson were written, I have perused the second edition of his Seasons, and find that even *that* does not contain the most striking passages which Warton points out for admiration; these, with other improvements, throughout the whole work, must have been added at a later period.

"Now daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe,
All save the Lady Emeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weepe:
And soone she heard her true Love's voice
Low whispering at the walle,
Awake, awake, my dear Ladye,
'Tis I thy true-love call."

Which is thus tricked out and dilated:

"Als nun die Nacht Gebirg' und Thal
Vermummt in Rabenschatten,
Und Hochburgs Lampen überall
Schon ausgeflimmert hatten,
Und alles tief entschlafen war;
Doch nur das Fräulein immerdar,
Voll Fieberängst, noch wachte,
Und seinen Ritter dachte:
Da horch! Ein süsser Liebeston
Kam leis' empor geflogen.
"Ho, Trudchen, ho! Da bin ich schon!
Frisch auf! Dich angezogen!"

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics.

All hail, Macpherson! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian! The Phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition—it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin Consistence took its course through Europe, upon the breath of popular applause. The Editor of the "Reliques" had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention, by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable! how selfish his conduct, contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gives his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner upon his own issue for a beggarly pittance!—Open this far-famed Book!—I have done so at random, and the beginning of the "Epic Poem Temora," in eight Books, presents itself. "The blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds." Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of Works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely-spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion.—Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the world under the name of Ossian. From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature everything is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work, it is exactly the reverse; everything (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened,—yet nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steeps of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his Car-borne heroes;—of Morven, which, if one may judge from its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed along its surface.—Mr. Malcolm Laing has ably shown that the diction of this pretended translation is a motley assemblage from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his "*ands*" and his "*buts!*" and he has weakened his argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a *conscious* plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the Translators of the Bible, and Shakspeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert, with Madame de Staël, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English Poets are derived from the ancient Fingallian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own.—It is consistent that Lucien Buonaparte, who could censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland;—a country that has produced a Dunbar, a Buchanan, a Thomson, and a Burns! These opinions are of ill omen for the Epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

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[1] Shenstone, in his Schoolmistress, gives a still more remarkable instance of this timidity. On its first appearance, (see D'Israeli's 2d Series of the Curiosities of Literature) the Poem was accompanied with an absurd prose commentary, showing, as indeed some incongruous expressions in the text imply, that the whole was intended for burlesque. In subsequent editions the commentary was dropped, and the People have since continued to read in seriousness, doing for the Author what he had not courage openly to venture upon for himself.

Yet, much as those pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly uninfluential upon the literature of the Country. No succeeding writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no author, in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them—except the boy, Chatterton, on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a magazine with *Saxon Poems*,—counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another. This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless.—Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the Reliques of Percy, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions!—I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own country, its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the Reliques; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr. Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to furnish Prefaces, biographical and critical, for the works of some of the most eminent English Poets. The booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of authors to be admitted into a body of the most eminent from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. The Editor was allowed a limited exercise of discretion, and the Authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be mentioned without a smile. We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the *first* name we find is that of Cowley!—What is become of the morning-star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan constellation? Or, if names be more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? where is Spenser? where Sidney? and, lastly, where he, whose rights as a poet, contradistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a dramatist, we have vindicated,—where Shakspeare?—These, and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have *not*. But in their stead, we have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made, as in this case before us?) Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt—Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed Magnates—metrical writers utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced, that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking, to declare them; but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, where lies the particular relation of what has been said to these Volumes?—The question will be easily answered by the discerning Reader who is old enough to remember the taste that prevailed when some of these poems were first published, seventeen years ago; who has also observed to what degree the poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them; and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and all been opposed. A sketch of my own notion of the constitution of Fame has been given; and, as far as concerns myself, I have cause to be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which these Poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind from which they have proceeded, and the labour and pains which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them, must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens, bearing the same general impression, though widely different in value;—they are all proofs that for the present time I have not laboured in vain; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of poetical Works, it is this,—that every author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them;—and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road:—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on men who may stand below him in the scale of society? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of readers by which they are to be humbled and humanised, in order that they may be purified and exalted?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here.—TASTE, I would remind the reader, like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive,—to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word Imagination has been overstrained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance of Taste, the process has been reversed; and from the prevalence of dispositions at once injurious and discreditable, being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy,—which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word Imagination; but the word Taste has been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office;—for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleasurably as by an instinct. But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or, in ordinary language, the pathetic and the sublime;—are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor—*Taste*. And why? Because without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliary impulse, elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies *suffering;* but the connection which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate and inseparable. How strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited by the fact that, in popular language, to be in a passion is to be angry!—But,

> "Anger in hasty *words* or *blows*
> Itself discharges on its foes."

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter, the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid,— and soon languishes, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original writer at his first appearance in the world.—Of genius the only proof is the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility for the delight, honour, and benefit of human nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe: or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the poet? Is it to be supposed that the reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian prince or general—stretched on his palanquin, and borne by slaves? No; he is invigorated and inspirited by his leader, in order that he may exert himself; for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem that, if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected. And, doubtless, in the works of every true poet will be found passages of that species of excellence which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others that are complex and revolutionary; some to which the heart yields with gentleness; others against which it struggles with pride; these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is not capable of exerting, within his own mind, a corresponding energy. There is also a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthusiastic as well as an ordinary sorrow; a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself—but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought. And for the sublime,—if we consider what are the cares that occupy the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the course of life from the sources of sublimity in the soul of Man, can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word *popular* applied to new works in poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell!—The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in everything which is to send the soul into herself, to be admonished of her weakness, or to be made conscious of her power; wherever life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination; wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic enunciation of the remotest future; *there*, the poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers.—Grand thoughts (and Shakspeare must often have sighed over this truth), as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits without some violation of their sanctity. Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good; but this advantage attends the good, that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age; whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal, the individual quickly *perishes;* the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced; which, though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of novelty,—with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole that, in the opinion of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious; and, could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The People have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it was said above that, of *good* poetry, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*. And how does it survive but through the People? What preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom?

"——Past and future, are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge——"
MS.

The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that Vox Populi which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry—transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation. Still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is anything of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is entitled to: but to the People, philosophically characterised, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them that, if he were not persuaded that the contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evince something of the "Vision and the Faculty divine"; and that, both in words and things, they will operate in their degree to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honour, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction—from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been. 1815.

DEDICATION

PREFIXED TO THE EDITION OF 1815

TO
SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT,
BART.

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,

Accept my thanks for the permission given me to dedicate these Volumes to you. In addition to a lively pleasure derived from general considerations, I feel a particular satisfaction; for, by inscribing these Poems with your Name, I seem to myself in some degree to repay, by an appropriate honour, the great obligation which I owe to one part of the Collection—as having been the means of first making us personally known to each other. Upon much of the remainder, also, you have a peculiar claim,—for some of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton; where I was animated by the recollection of those illustrious Poets of your name and family, who were born in that neighbourhood; and, we may be assured, did not wander with indifference by the dashing stream of Grace Dieu, and among the rocks that diversify the forest of Charnwood.—Nor is there any one to whom such parts of this Collection as have been inspired or coloured by the beautiful Country from which I now address you, could be presented with more propriety than to yourself—to whom it has suggested so many admirable pictures. Early in life, the sublimity and beauty of this region excited your admiration; and I know that you are bound to it in mind by a still strengthening attachment.

Wishing and hoping that this Work, with the embellishments it has received from your pencil,[1] may survive as a lasting memorial of a friendship, which I reckon among the blessings of my life,

I have the honour to be,
My dear Sir George,
Yours most affectionately and faithfully,
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
February 1, 1815

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1815

THE powers requisite for the production of poetry are: first, those of Observation and Description,—*i.e.*, the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer: whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses, or have a place only in the memory. This power, though indispensable to a Poet, is one which he employs only in submission to necessity, and never for a continuance of time: as its exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of subjection to external objects, much in the same way as a translator or engraver ought to be to his original. 2dly, Sensibility,—which, the more exquisite it is, the wider will be the range of a poet's perceptions; and the more will he be incited to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves and as re-acted upon by his own mind. (The distinction between poetic and human sensibility has been marked in the character of the Poet delineated in the original preface.) 3dly, Reflection,—which makes the Poet acquainted with the value of actions, images, thoughts, and feelings; and assists the sensibility in perceiving their connection with each other. 4thly, Imagination and Fancy,—to modify, to create, and to associate. 5thly, Invention,—by which characters are composed out of materials supplied by observation; whether of the Poet's own heart and mind, or of external life and nature; and such incidents and situations produced as are most impressive to the imagination, and most fitted to do justice to the characters, sentiments, and passions, which the Poet undertakes to illustrate. And, lastly, Judgment,—to decide how and where, and in what degree, each of these faculties ought to be exerted; so that the less shall not be sacrificed to the greater; nor the greater, slighting the less, arrogate, to its own injury, more than its due. By judgment, also, is determined what are the laws and appropriate graces of every species of composition.[2]

The materials of Poetry, by these powers collected and produced, are cast, by means of various moulds, into divers forms. The moulds may be enumerated, and the forms specified, in the following order. 1st, The Narrative,—including the Epopœia, the Historic Poem, the Tale, the Romance, the Mock-heroic, and, if the spirit of Homer will tolerate such neighbourhood, that dear production of our days, the metrical Novel. Of this Class, the distinguishing mark is, that the Narrator, however liberally his speaking agents be introduced, is himself the source from which everything primarily flows. Epic Poets, in order that their mode of composition may accord with the elevation of their subject, represent themselves as *singing* from the inspiration of the Muse, "Arma virumque *cano;*" but this is a fiction, in modern times, of slight value: the Iliad or the Paradise Lost would gain little in our estimation by being chanted. The other poets who belong to this class are commonly content to *tell* their tale;—so that of the whole it may be affirmed that they neither require nor reject the accompaniment of music.

2dly, The Dramatic,—consisting of Tragedy, Historic Drama, Comedy, and Masque, in which the poet does not appear at all in his own person, and where the whole action is carried on by speech and dialogue of the agents; music being admitted only incidentally and rarely. The Opera may be placed here, inasmuch as it proceeds by dialogue; though depending, to the degree that it does, upon music, it has a strong claim to be ranked with the lyrical. The characteristic and impassioned Epistle, of which Ovid and Pope have given examples, considered as a species of monodrama, may, without impropriety, be placed in this class.

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[1] The state of the plates has, for some time, not allowed them to be repeated.

[2] As sensibility to harmony of numbers, and the power of producing it, are invariably attendants upon the faculties above specified, nothing has been said upon those requisites.

3dly, The Lyrical—containing the Hymn, the Ode, the Elegy, the Song, and the Ballad; in all which, for the production of their *full* effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable.

4thly, The Idyllium,—descriptive chiefly either of the processes and appearances of external nature, as the Seasons of Thomson; or of characters, manners, and sentiments, as are Shenstone's Schoolmistress, The Cotter's Saturday Night of Burns, the Twa Dogs of the same Author; or of these in conjunction with the appearances of Nature, as most of the pieces of Theocritus, the Allegro and Penseroso of Milton, Beattie's Minstrel, Goldsmith's Deserted Village. The Epitaph, the Inscription, the Sonnet, most of the epistles of poets writing in their own persons, and all loco-descriptive poetry, belong to this class.

5thly, Didactic,—the principal object of which is direct instruction; as the Poem of Lucretius, the Georgics of Virgil, The Fleece of Dyer, Mason's English Garden, etc.

And, lastly, philosophical Satire, like that of Horace and Juvenal; personal and occasional Satire rarely comprehending sufficient of the general in the individual to be dignified with the name of poetry.

Out of the three last has been constructed a composite order, of which Young's Night Thoughts, and Cowper's Task, are excellent examples.

It is deducible from the above, that poems, apparently miscellaneous, may with propriety be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate. From each of these considerations, the following Poems have been divided into classes; which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of human life, and for the sake of exhibiting in it the three requisites of a legitimate whole, a beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality. My guiding wish was that the small pieces of which these volumes consist, thus discriminated, might be regarded under a two-fold view; as composing an entire work within themselves, and as adjuncts to the philosophical Poem, "The Recluse." This arrangement has long presented itself habitually to my own mind. Nevertheless, I should have preferred to scatter the contents of these volumes at random, if I had been persuaded that, by the plan adopted, anything material would be taken from the natural effect of the pieces, individually, on the mind of the unreflecting Reader. I trust there is a sufficient variety in each class to prevent this; while, for him who reads with reflection, the arrangement will serve as a commentary unostentatiously directing his attention to my purposes, both particular and general. But as I wish to guard against the possibility of misleading by this classification, it is proper first to remind the Reader that certain poems are placed according to the powers of mind, in the Author's conception, predominant in the production of them; *predominant*, which implies the exertion of other faculties in less degree. Where there is more imagination than fancy in a poem, it is placed under the head of imagination, and *vice versâ*. Both the above classes might without impropriety have been enlarged from that consisting of "Poems founded on the Affections;" as might this latter from those, and from the class "proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection." The most striking characteristics of each piece, mutual illustration, variety, and proportion, have governed me throughout.

None of the other Classes, except those of Fancy and Imagination, require any particular notice. But a remark of general application may be made. All Poets, except the dramatic, have been in the practice of feigning that their works were composed to the music of the harp or lyre: with what degree of affectation this has been done in modern times, I leave to the judicious to determine. For my own part, I have not been disposed to violate probability so far, or to make such a large demand upon the Reader's charity. Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves; the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible,—the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification,—as to deprive the Reader of all voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem;—in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images. But, though the accompaniment of a musical instrument be frequently dispensed with, the true Poet does not therefore abandon his privilege distinct from that of the mere Proseman;

> "He murmurs near the running brooks
> A music sweeter than their own."

Let us come now to the consideration of the words Fancy and Imagination, as employed in the classification of the following Poems. "A man," says an intelligent author, "has imagination in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense: it is the faculty which *images* within the mind the phenomena of sensation. A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (φαντάζειν is to cause to appear), so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects. Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation; the fancy by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterised. The more versatile the fancy, the more original and striking will be the decorations produced."—*British Synonyms discriminated, by W. Taylor.*

Is not this as if a man should undertake to supply an account of a building, and be so intent upon what he had discovered of the foundation, as to conclude his task without once looking up at the superstructure? Here, as in other instances throughout the volume, the judicious Author's mind is enthralled by Etymology; he takes up the original word as his guide and escort, and too often does not perceive how soon he becomes its prisoner, without liberty to tread in any path but that to which it confines him. It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them: each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two words bear the above meaning, and no other, what term is left to designate that faculty of which the Poet is "all compact;" he whose eye glances from earth to heaven, whose spiritual attributes body forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape; or what is left to characterise Fancy, as insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity?—Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a class of the following Poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances. A parrot *hangs* from the wires of his cage by his beak or by his claws; or a monkey from the bough of a tree by his paws or his tail. Each creature does so literally and actually. In the first Eclogue of Virgil, the shepherd, thinking of the time when he is to take leave of his farm, thus addresses his goats:—

> "Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in antro
> Dumosa *pendere* procul de rupe videbo."

> ——— "half way down
> *Hangs* one who gathers samphire,"

is the well-known expression of Shakspeare, delineating an ordinary image upon the cliffs of Dover. In these two instances is a slight exertion of the faculty which I denominate imagination, in the use of one word: neither the goats nor the samphire-gatherer do literally hang, as does the parrot or the monkey; but, presenting to the senses something of such an appearance, the mind in its activity, for its own gratification, contemplates them as hanging.

"As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate or Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Fly, stemming nightly toward the Pole: so seemed
Far off the flying Fiend."

Here is the full strength of the imagination involved in the word *hangs*, and exerted upon the whole image: First, the fleet, an aggregate of many ships, is represented as one mighty person, whose track, we know and feel, is upon the waters; but, taking advantage of its appearance to the senses, the Poet dares to represent it as *hanging in the clouds*, both for the gratification of the mind in contemplating the image itself, and in reference to the motion and appearance of the sublime objects to which it is compared.

From impressions of sight we will pass to those of sound; which, as they must necessarily be of a less definite character, shall be selected from these volumes:

"Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove *broods*,"

of the same bird,

"His voice was *buried* among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze;"

"O, Cuckoo! shall I call thee *Bird*,
Or but a wandering *Voice*?"

The stock-dove is said to *coo*, a sound well imitating the note of the bird; but, by the intervention of the metaphor *broods*, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which the bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation. "His voice was buried among trees," a metaphor expressing the love of *seclusion* by which this Bird is marked; and characterising its note as not partaking of the shrill and the piercing, and therefore more easily deadened by the intervening shade; yet a note so peculiar and withal so pleasing, that the breeze, gifted with that love of the sound which the Poet feels, penetrates the shades in which it is entombed, and conveys it to the ear of the listener.

"Shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?"

This concise interrogation characterises the seeming ubiquity of the voice of the cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a corporeal existence; the Imagination being tempted to this exertion of her power by a consciousness in the memory that the cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.

Thus far of images independent of each other, and immediately endowed by the mind with properties that do not inhere in them, upon an incitement from properties and qualities the existence of which is inherent and obvious. These processes of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to re-act upon the mind which hath performed the process like a new existence.

I pass from the Imagination acting upon an individual image to a consideration of the same faculty employed upon images in a conjunction by which they modify each other. The Reader has already had a fine instance before him in the passage quoted from Virgil, where the apparently perilous situation of the goat, hanging upon the shaggy precipice, is contrasted with that of the shepherd contemplating it from the seclusion of the cavern in which he lies stretched at ease and in security. Take these images separately, and how unaffecting the picture compared with that produced by their being thus connected with, and opposed to, each other!

"As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence,

Wonder to all who do the same espy
By what means it could thither come, and
whence,
So that it seems a thing endued with sense,
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun himself.

Such seemed this Man; not all alive or dead,
Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.

* * * * * *

Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth altogether if it move at all."

In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The stone is endowed with something of the power of life to approximate it to the sea-beast; and the sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone; which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged Man; who is divested of so much of the indications of life and motion as to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison. After what has been said, the image of the cloud need not be commented upon.

Thus far of an endowing or modifying power; but the Imagination also shapes and *creates;* and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number, — alternations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. Recur to the passage already cited from Milton. When the compact Fleet, as one Person, has been introduced "Sailing from Bengala," "They," *i.e.* the "merchants," representing the fleet resolved into a multitude of ships, "ply" their voyage towards the extremities of the earth: "So" (referring to the word "As" in the commencement) "seemed the flying Fiend;" the image of his Person acting to recombine the multitude of ships into one body,—the point from which the comparison set out. "So seemed." and to whom seemed? To the heavenly Muse who dictates the poem, to the eye of the Poet's mind, and to that of the Reader, present at one moment in the wide Ethiopian, and the next in the solitudes, then first broken in upon, of the infernal regions!

"Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis."

Hear again this mighty Poet,—speaking of the Messiah going forth to expel from heaven the rebellious angels,

"Attended by ten thousand thousand Saints
He onward came: far off his coming shone,"—

the retinue of Saints, and the Person of the Messiah himself, lost almost and merged in the splendour of that indefinite abstraction "His coming"!

As I do not mean here to treat this subject further than to throw some light upon the present Volumes, and especially upon one division of them, I shall spare myself and the Reader the trouble of considering the Imagination as it deals with thoughts and sentiments, as it regulates the composition of characters, and determines the course of actions: I will not consider it (more than I have already done by implication) as that power which, in the language of one of my most esteemed Friends, "draws all things to one; which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect."[1] The grand storehouses of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contradistinguished from human and dramatic Imagination, are the prophetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton; to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser. I select these writers in preference to those of ancient Greece and Rome, because the anthropomorphism of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form; from which the Hebrews were preserved by their abhorrence of idolatry. This abhorrence was almost as strong in our great epic Poet, both from circumstances of his life, and from the constitution of his mind. However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul; and all things tended in him towards the sublime. Spenser, of a gentler nature, maintained his freedom by aid of his allegorical spirit, at one time inciting him to create persons out of abstractions; and, at another, by a superior effort of genius, to give the universality and permanence of abstractions to his human beings, by means of attributes and emblems that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations,—of which his character of Una is a glorious example. Of the human and dramatic Imagination the works of Shakspeare are an inexhaustible source.

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[1] Charles Lamb upon the genius of Hogarth.

"I tax not you, ye Elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdoms, call'd you Daughters!"

And if, bearing in mind the many Poets distinguished by this prime quality, whose names I omit to mention, yet justified by recollection of the insults which the ignorant, the incapable, and the presumptuous, have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself, I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given in these unfavourable times evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions; which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance.

To the mode in which Fancy has already been characterised as the power of evoking and combining, or, as my friend Mr. Coleridge has styled it, "the aggregative and associative power," my objection is only that the definition is too general. To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the Fancy; but either the materials evoked and combined are different, or they are brought together under a different law, and for a different purpose. Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution from her touch; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these are the desires and demands of the Imagination. She recoils from everything but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite. She leaves it to Fancy to describe Queen Mab as coming,

"In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman."

Having to speak of stature, she does not tell you that her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey's Pillar; much less that he was twelve cubits or twelve hundred cubits high; or that his dimensions equalled those of Teneriffe or Atlas;—because these, and if they were a million times as high it would be the same, are bounded: The expression is, "His stature reached the sky!" the illimitable firmament!—When the Imagination frames a comparison, if it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows—and continues to grow—upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and outstanding than upon inherent and internal properties: moreover, the images invariably modify each other.—The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities. If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion;—the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur; but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished.—Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal.—Yet is it not the less true that Fancy, as she is an active, is also, under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty. In what manner Fancy ambitiously aims at a rivalship with Imagination, and Imagination stoops to work with the materials of Fancy, might be illustrated from the compositions of all eloquent writers, whether in prose or verse; and chiefly from those of our own Country. Scarcely a page of the impassioned parts of Bishop Taylor's Works can be opened that shall not afford examples. —Referring the Reader to those inestimable volumes, I will content myself with placing a conceit (ascribed to Lord Chesterfield) in contrast with a passage from the Paradise Lost:—

"The dews of the evening most carefully shun,
They are the tears of the sky for the loss of the sun."

After the transgression of Adam, Milton, with other appearances of sympathising Nature, thus marks the immediate consequence,

"Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin."

The associating link is the same in each instance: Dew and rain, not distinguishable from the liquid substance of tears, are employed as indications of sorrow. A flash of surprise is the effect in the former case; a flash of surprise, and nothing more; for the nature of things does not sustain the combination. In the latter, the effects from the act, of which there is this immediate consequence and visible sign, are so momentous that the mind acknowledges the justice and reasonableness of the sympathy in nature so manifested; and the sky weeps drops of water as if with human eyes, as "Earth had before trembled from her entrails, and Nature given a second groan."

Finally, I will refer to Cotton's "Ode upon Winter," an admirable composition, though stained with some peculiarities of the age in which he lived, for a general illustration of the characteristics of Fancy. The middle part of this ode contains a most lively description of the entrance of Winter, with his retinue, as "A palsied king," and yet a military monarch,—advancing for conquest with his army; the several bodies of which, and their arms and equipments, are described with a rapidity of detail, and a profusion of *fanciful* comparisons, which indicate on the part of the poet extreme activity of intellect, and a correspondent hurry of delightful feeling. Winter retires from the foe into his fortress, where

——"a magazine
Of sovereign juice is cellared in;
Liquor that will the siege maintain
Should Phœbus ne'er return again."

Though myself a water-drinker, I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing what follows, as an instance still more happy of Fancy employed in the treatment of feeling than, in its preceding passages, the Poem supplies of her management of forms.

"'Tis that, that gives the poet rage,
And thaws the gelly'd blood of age;
Matures the young, restores the old,
And makes the fainting coward bold.

It lays the careful head to rest,
Calms palpitations in the breast,
Renders our lives' misfortune sweet;

* * * * *

Then let the chill Sirocco blow,
And gird us round with hills of snow,
Or else go whistle to the shore,
And make the hollow mountains roar,

Whilst we together jovial sit
Careless, and crowned with mirth and wit,
Where, though bleak winds confine us home,
Our fancies round the world shall roam.

We'll think of all the Friends we know,
And drink to all worth drinking to;
When having drunk all thine and mine,
We rather shall want healths than wine.

But where Friends fail us, we'll supply
Our friendships with our charity;
Men that remote in sorrows live,
Shall by our lusty brimmers thrive.

We'll drink the wanting into wealth,
And those that languish into health,
The afflicted into joy; th' opprest
Into security and rest.

The worthy in disgrace shall find
Favour return again more kind,
And in restraint who stifled lie,
Shall taste the air of liberty.

The brave shall triumph in success,
The lovers shall have mistresses,
Poor unregarded Virtue, praise,
And the neglected Poet, bays.

Thus shall our healths do others good,
Whilst we ourselves do all we would;
For, freed from envy and from care,
What would we be but what we are?"

When I sate down to write this Preface, it was my intention to have made it more comprehensive; but, thinking that I ought rather to apologise for detaining the reader so long, I will here conclude.

POSTSCRIPT

1835

In the present Volume, as in those that have preceded it, the reader will have found occasionally opinions expressed upon the course of public affairs, and feelings given vent to as national interests excited them. Since nothing, I trust, has been uttered but in the spirit of reflective patriotism, those notices are left to produce their own effect; but, among the many objects of general concern, and the changes going forward, which I have glanced at in verse, are some especially affecting the lower orders of society: in reference to these, I wish here to add a few words in plain prose.

Were I conscious of being able to do justice to those important topics, I might avail myself of the periodical press for offering anonymously my thoughts, such as they are, to the world; but I feel that in procuring attention, they may derive some advantage, however small, from my name, in addition to that of being presented in a less fugitive shape. It is also not impossible that the state of mind which some of the foregoing poems may have produced in the reader, will dispose him to receive more readily the impression which I desire to make, and to admit the conclusions I would establish.

I. The first thing that presses upon my attention is the Poor-Law Amendment Act. I am aware of the magnitude and complexity of the subject, and the unwearied attention which it has received from men of far wider experience than my own; yet I cannot forbear touching upon one point of it, and to this I will confine myself, though not insensible to the objection which may reasonably be brought against treating a portion of this, or any other, great scheme of civil polity separately from the whole. The point to which I wish to draw the reader's attention is, that *all* persons who cannot find employment, or procure wages sufficient to support the body in health and strength, are entitled to a maintenance by law.

This dictate of humanity is acknowledged in the Report of the Commissioners: but is there not room for apprehension that some of the regulations of the new act have a tendency to render the principle nugatory by difficulties thrown in the way of applying it? If this be so, persons will not be wanting to show it, by examining the provisions of the act in detail,—an attempt which would be quite out of place here; but it will not, therefore, be deemed unbecoming in one who fears that the prudence of the head may, in framing some of those provisions, have supplanted the wisdom of the heart, to enforce a principle which cannot be violated without infringing upon one of the most precious rights of the English people, and opposing one of the most sacred claims of civilised humanity.

There can be no greater error, in this department of legislation, than the belief that this principle does by necessity operate for the degradation of those who claim, or are so circumstanced as to make it likely they may claim, through laws founded upon it, relief or assistance. The direct contrary is the truth: it may be unanswerably maintained that its tendency is to raise, not to depress; by stamping a value upon life, which can belong to it only where the laws have placed men who are willing to work, and yet cannot find employment, above the necessity of looking for protection against hunger and other natural evils, either to individual and casual charity, to despair and death, or to the breach of law by theft or violence.

And here, as, in the Report of the Commissioners, the fundamental principle has been recognised, I am not at issue with them any farther than I am compelled to believe that their "remedial measures" obstruct the application of it more than the interests of society require.

And, calling to mind the doctrines of political economy which are now prevalent, I cannot forbear to enforce the justice of the principle, and to insist upon its salutary operation.

And first for its justice: If self-preservation be the first law of our nature, would not every one in a state of nature be morally justified in taking to himself that which is indispensable to such preservation, where, by so doing, he would not rob another of that which might be equally indispensable to *his* preservation? And if the value of life be regarded in a right point of view, may it not be questioned whether this right of preserving life, at any expense short of endangering the life of another, does not survive man's entering into the social state; whether this right can be surrendered or forfeited, except when it opposes the divine law, upon any supposition of a social compact, or of any convention for the protection of mere rights of property?

But if it be not safe to touch the abstract question of man's right in a social state to help himself even in the last extremity, may we not still contend for the duty of a christian government, standing *in loco parentis* towards all its subjects, to make such effectual provision, that no one shall be in danger of perishing either through the neglect or harshness of its legislation? Or, waiving this, is it not indisputable that the claim of the state to the allegiance involves the protection of the subject? And, as all rights in one party impose a correlative duty upon another, it follows that the right of the state to require the services of its members, even to the jeoparding of their lives in the common defence, establishes a right in the people (not to be gainsaid by utilitarians and economists) to public support when from any cause they may be unable to support themselves.

Let us now consider the salutary and benign operation of this principle. Here we must have recourse to elementary feelings of human nature, and to truths which from their very obviousness are apt to be slighted, till they are forced upon our notice by our own sufferings or those of others. In the Paradise Lost, Milton represents Adam, after the Fall, as exclaiming, in the anguish of his soul—

> "Did I request Thee, Maker, from my clay
> To mould me man; did I solicit Thee
> From darkness to promote me?
> . . . . My will
> Concurred not to my being."

Under how many various pressures of misery have men been driven thus, in a strain touching upon impiety, to expostulate with the Creator! and under few so afflictive as when the source and origin of earthly existence have been brought back to the mind by its impending close in the pangs of destitution. But as long as, in our legislation, due weight shall be given to this principle, no man will be forced to bewail the gift of life in hopeless want of the necessaries of life.

Englishmen have, therefore, by the progress of civilisation among them, been placed in circumstances more favourable to piety and resignation to the divine will than the inhabitants of other countries, where a like provision has not been established. And as Providence, in this care of our countrymen, acts through a human medium, the objects of that care must, in like manner, be more inclined towards a grateful love of their fellow-men. Thus, also, do stronger ties attach the people to their country, whether while they tread its soil, or, at a distance, think of their native land as an indulgent parent, to whose arms even they who have been imprudent and undeserving may, like the prodigal son, betake themselves, without fear of being rejected.

Such is the view of the case that would first present itself to a reflective mind; and it is in vain to show, by appeals to experience, in contrast with this view, that provisions founded upon the principle have promoted profaneness of life and dispositions the reverse of philanthropic, by spreading idleness, selfishness, and rapacity: for these evils have arisen, not as an inevitable consequence of the principle, but for want of judgment in framing laws based upon it; and, above all, from faults in the mode of administering the law. The mischief that has grown to such a height from granting relief in cases where proper vigilance would have shown that it was not required, or in bestowing it in undue measure, will be urged by no truly enlightened statesman as a sufficient reason for banishing the principle itself from legislation.

Let us recur to the miserable states of consciousness that it precludes.

There is a story told, by a traveller in Spain, of a female who, by a sudden shock of domestic calamity, was driven out of her senses, and ever after looked up incessantly to the sky, feeling that her fellow-creatures could do nothing for her relief. Can there be Englishmen who, with a good end in view, would, upon system, expose their brother Englishmen to a like necessity of looking upwards only; or downwards to the earth, after it shall contain no spot where the destitute can demand, by civil right, what by right of nature they are entitled to?

Suppose the objects of our sympathy not sunk into this blank despair, but wandering about as strangers in streets and ways, with the hope of succour from casual charity; what have we gained by such a change of scene? Woful is the condition of the famished Northern Indian, dependent, among winter snows, upon the chance-passage of a herd of deer, from which one, if brought down by his rifle-gun, may be made the means of keeping him and his companions alive. As miserable is that of some savage Islander, who, when the land has ceased to afford him sustenance, watches for food which the waves may cast up, or in vain endeavours to extract it from the inexplorable deep. But neither of these is in a state of wretchedness comparable to that which is so often endured in civilised society: multitudes, in all ages, have known it, of whom may be said:—

"Homeless, near a thousand homes they stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food."

Justly might I be accused of wasting time in an uncalled-for attempt to excite the feelings of the reader, if systems of political economy, widely spread, did not impugn the principle, and if the safeguards against such extremities were left unimpaired. It is broadly asserted by many, that every man who endeavours to find work *may* find it: were this assertion capable of being verified, there still would remain a question, what kind of work, and how far may the labourer be fit for it? For if sedentary work is to be exchanged for standing, and some light and nice exercise of the fingers, to which an artisan has been accustomed all his life, for severe labour of the arms, the best efforts would turn to little account, and occasion would be given for the unthinking and the unfeeling unwarrantably to reproach those who are put upon such employment as idle, froward, and unworthy of relief, either by law or in any other way! Were this statement correct, there would indeed be an end of the argument, the principle here maintained would be superseded. But, alas! it is far otherwise. That principle, applicable to the benefit of all countries, is indispensable for England, upon whose coast families are perpetually deprived of their support by shipwreck, and where large masses of men are so liable to be thrown out of their ordinary means of gaining bread, by changes in commercial intercourse, subject mainly or solely to the will of foreign powers; by new discoveries in arts and manufactures; and by reckless laws, in conformity with theories of political economy, which, whether right or wrong in the abstract, have proved a scourge to tens of thousands by the abruptness with which they have been carried into practice.

But it is urged,—refuse altogether compulsory relief to the able-bodied, and the number of those who stand in need of relief will steadily diminish through a conviction of an absolute necessity for greater forethought and more prudent care of a man's earnings. Undoubtedly it would, but so also would it, and in a much greater degree, if the legislative provisions were retained, and parochial relief administered under the care of the upper classes, as it ought to be.

For it has been invariably found, that wherever the funds have been raised and applied under the superintendence of gentlemen and substantial proprietors, acting in vestries and as overseers, pauperism has diminished accordingly. Proper care in that quarter would effectually check what is felt in some districts to be one of the worst evils in the poor law system, viz. the readiness of small and needy proprietors to join in imposing rates that seemingly subject them to great hardships, while, in fact, this is done with a mutual understanding that the relief each is ready to bestow upon his still poorer neighbours will be granted to himself, or his relatives, should it hereafter be applied for.

But let us look to inner sentiments of a nobler quality, in order to know what we have to build upon. Affecting proofs occur in every one's experience, who is acquainted with the unfortunate and the indigent, of their unwillingness to derive their subsistence from aught but their own funds or labour, or to be indebted to parochial assistance for the attainment of any object, however dear to them. A case was reported, the other day, from a coroner's inquest, of a pair who, through the space of four years, had carried about their dead infant from house to house, and from lodging to lodging, as their necessities drove them, rather than ask the parish to bear the expense of its interment:—the poor creatures lived in the hope of one day being able to bury their child at their own cost. It must have been heart-rendering to see and hear the mother, who had been called upon to account for the state in which the body was found, make this deposition. By some, judging coldly, if not harshly, this conduct might be imputed to an unwarrantable pride, as she and her husband had, it is true, been once in prosperity. But examples, where the spirit of independence works with equal strength, though not with like miserable accompaniments, are frequently to be found even yet among the humblest peasantry and mechanics. There is not, then, sufficient cause for doubting that a like sense of honour may be revived among the people, and their ancient habits of independence restored, without resorting to those severities which the new Poor Law Act has introduced.

But even if the surfaces of things only are to be examined, we have a right to expect that lawgivers should take into account the various tempers and dispositions of mankind: while some are led, by the existence of a legislative provision, into idleness and extravagance, the economical virtues might be cherished in others by the knowledge that, if all their efforts fail, they have in the Poor Laws a "refuge from the storm and a shadow from the heat." Despondency and distraction are no friends to prudence: the springs of industry will relax, if cheerfulness be destroyed by anxiety; without hope men become reckless, and have a sullen pride in adding to the heap of their own wretchedness. He who feels that he is abandoned by his fellow-men will be almost irresistibly driven to care little for himself; will lose his self-respect accordingly, and with that loss what remains to him of virtue?

With all due deference to the particular experience and general intelligence of the individuals who framed the Act, and of those who in and out of parliament have approved of and supported it, it may be said that it proceeds too much upon the presumption that it is a labouring man's own fault if he be not, as the phrase is, beforehand with the world. But the most prudent are liable to be thrown back by sickness, cutting them off from labour, and causing to them expense: and who but has observed how distress creeps upon multitudes without misconduct of their own; and merely from a gradual fall in the price of labour, without a correspondent one in the price of provisions; so that men who may have ventured upon the marriage state with a fair prospect of maintaining their families in comfort and happiness, see them reduced to a pittance which no effort of theirs can increase? Let it be remembered, also, that there are thousands with whom vicious habits of expense are not the cause why they do not store up their gains; but they are generous and kind-hearted, and ready to help their kindred and friends; moreover, they have a faith in Providence that those who have been prompt to assist others, will not be left destitute, should they themselves come to need. By acting from these blended feelings, numbers have rendered themselves incapable of standing up against a sudden reverse. Nevertheless, these men, in common with all who have the misfortune to be in want, if many theorists had their wish, would be thrown upon one or other of those three sharp points of condition before adverted to, from which the intervention of law has hitherto saved them.

All that has been said tends to show how the principle contended for makes the gift of life more valuable, and has, it may be hoped, led to the conclusion that its legitimate operation is to make men worthier of that gift: in other words, not to degrade but to exalt human nature. But the subject must not be dismissed without adverting to the indirect influence of the same principle upon the moral sentiments of a people among whom it is embodied in law. In our criminal jurisprudence there is a maxim, deservedly eulogised, that it is better that ten guilty persons should escape, than that one innocent man should suffer; so, also, might it be maintained, with regard to the Poor Laws, that it is better for the interests of humanity among the people at large, that ten undeserving should partake of the funds provided, than that one morally good man, through want of relief, should either have his principles corrupted or his energies destroyed; than that such a one should either be driven to do wrong or be cast to the earth in utter hopelessness. In France the English maxim of criminal jurisprudence is reversed; there, it is deemed better that ten innocent men should suffer than one guilty escape: in France there is no universal provision for the poor; and we may judge of the small value set upon human life in the metropolis of that country, by merely noticing the disrespect with which, after death, the body is treated, not by the thoughtless vulgar, but in schools of anatomy, presided over by men allowed to be, in their own art and in physical science, among the most enlightened in the world. In the East, where countries are overrun with population as with a weed, infinitely more respect is shown to the remains of the deceased; and what a bitter mockery is it, that this insensibility should be found where civil polity is so busy in minor regulations, and ostentatiously careful to gratify the luxurious propensities, whether social or intellectual, of the multitude! Irreligion is, no doubt, much concerned with this offensive disrespect shown to the bodies of the dead in France; but it is mainly attributable to the state in which so many of the living are left by the absence of compulsory provision for the indigent so humanely established by the law of England.

Sights of abject misery, perpetually recurring, harden the heart of the community. In the perusal of history and of works of fiction we are not, indeed, unwilling to have our commiseration excited by such objects of distress as they present to us; but, in the concerns of real life, men know that such emotions are not given to be indulged for their own sakes: there, the conscience declares to them that sympathy must be followed by action; and if there exist a previous conviction that the power to relieve is utterly inadequate to the demand, the eye shrinks from communication with wretchedness, and pity and compassion languish, like any other qualities that are deprived of their natural aliment. Let these considerations be duly weighed by those who trust to the hope that an increase of private charity, with all its advantages of superior discrimination, would more than compensate for the abandonment of those principles, the wisdom of which has been here insisted upon. How discouraging, also, would be the sense of injustice, which could not fail to arise in the minds of the well-disposed, if the burden of supporting the poor, a burden of which the selfish have hitherto by compulsion borne a share, should now, or hereafter, be thrown exclusively upon the benevolent.

By having put an end to the Slave Trade and Slavery, the British people are exalted in the scale of humanity; and they cannot but feel so, if they look into themselves, and duly consider their relation to God and their fellow-creatures. That was a noble advance; but a retrograde movement will assuredly be made, if ever the principle which has been here defended should be either avowedly abandoned or but ostensibly retained.

But, after all, there may be a little reason to apprehend permanent injury from any experiment that may be tried. On the one side will be human nature rising up in her own defence, and on the other prudential selfishness acting to the same purpose, from a conviction that, without a compulsory provision for the exigencies of the labouring multitude, that degree of ability to regulate the price of labour, which is indispensable for the reasonable interest of arts and manufactures, cannot, in Great Britain, be upheld.

II. In a poem of the foregoing collection allusion is made to the state of the workmen congregated in manufactories. In order to relieve many of the evils to which that class of society are subject, and to establish a better harmony between them and their employers, it would be well to repeal such laws as prevent the formation of joint-stock companies. There are, no doubt, many and great obstacles to the formation and salutary working of these societies, inherent in the mind of those whom they would obviously benefit. But the combinations of masters to keep down, unjustly, the price of labour would be fairly checked by them, as far as they were practicable; they would encourage economy, inasmuch as they would enable a man to draw profit from his savings, by investing them in buildings or machinery for processes of manufacture with which he was habitually connected. His little capital would then be working for him while he was at rest or asleep; he would more clearly perceive the necessity of capital for carrying on great works; he would better learn to respect the larger portions of it in the hands of others; he would be less tempted to join in unjust combinations; and, for the sake of his own property, if not for higher reasons, he would be slow to promote local disturbance or endanger public tranquillity; he would, at least, be loth to act in that way *knowingly:* for it is not to be denied that such societies might be nurseries of opinions unfavourable to a mixed constitution of government, like that of Great Britain. The democratic and republican spirit which they might be apt to foster would not, however, be dangerous in itself, but only as it might act without being sufficiently counterbalanced, either by landed proprietorship, or by a Church extending itself so as to embrace an ever-growing and ever-shifting population of mechanics and artisans. But if the tendencies of such societies would be to make the men prosper who might belong to them, rulers and legislators should rejoice in the result, and do their duty to the state by upholding and extending the influence of that Church to which it owes, in so great a measure, its safety, its prosperity, and its glory.

This, in the temper of the present times, may be difficult, but it is become indispensable, since large towns in great numbers have sprung up, and others have increased tenfold, with little or no dependence upon the gentry and the landed proprietors; and apart from those mitigated feudal institutions, which, till of late, have acted so powerfully upon the composition of the House of Commons. Now it may be affirmed that, in quarters where there is not an attachment to the Church, or the landed aristocracy, and a pride in supporting them, *there* the people will dislike both, and be ready, upon such incitements as are perpetually recurring, to join in attempts to overthrow them. There is no neutral ground here: from want of due attention to the state of society in large towns and manufacturing districts, and ignorance or disregard of these obvious truths, innumerable well-meaning persons became zealous supporters of a Reform Bill, the qualities and powers of which, whether destructive or constructive, they would otherwise have been afraid of; and even the framers of that bill, swayed as they might be by party resentments and personal ambition, could not have gone so far, had not they too been lamentably ignorant or neglectful of the same truths both of fact and philosophy.

But let that pass; and let no opponent of the bill be tempted to compliment his own foresight, by exaggerating the mischiefs and dangers that have sprung from it: let not time be wasted in profitless regrets; and let those party distinctions vanish to their very names that have separated men who, whatever course they may have pursued, have ever had a bond of union in the wish to save the limited monarchy and those other institutions that have, under Providence, rendered for so long a period of time this country the happiest and worthiest of which there is any record since the foundation of civil society.

III. A philosophic mind is best pleased when looking at religion in its spiritual bearing; as a guide of conduct, a solace under affliction, and a support amid the instabilities of mortal life: but the Church having been forcibly brought by political considerations to my notice, while treating of the labouring classes, I cannot forbear saying a few words upon that momentous topic.

There is a loud clamour for extensive change in that department. The clamour would be entitled to more respect if they who are the most eager to swell it with their voices were not generally the most ignorant of the real state of the Church and the service it renders to the community. *Reform* is the word employed. Let us pause and consider what sense it is apt to carry, and how things are confounded by a lax use of it. The great religious Reformation, in the sixteenth century, did not profess to be a new construction, but a restoration of something fallen into decay, or put out of sight. That familiar and justifiable use of the word seems to have paved the way for fallacies with respect to the term reform, which it is difficult to escape from. Were we to speak of improvement and the correction of abuses, we should run less risk of being deceived ourselves or of misleading others. We should be less likely to fall blindly into the belief that the change demanded is a renewal of something that has existed before, and that, therefore, we have experience on our side; nor should we be equally tempted to beg the question that the change for which we are eager must be advantageous. From generation to generation, men are the dupes of words; and it is painful to observe that so many of our species are most tenacious of those opinions which they have formed with the least consideration. They who are the readiest to meddle with public affairs, whether in church or state, fly to generalities, that they may be eased from the trouble of thinking about particulars; and thus is deputed to mechanical instrumentality the work which vital knowledge only can do well.

"Abolish pluralities, have a resident incumbent in every parish," is a favourite cry; but, without adverting to other obstacles in the way of this specious scheme, it may be asked what benefit would accrue from its *indiscriminate* adoption to counterbalance the harm it would introduce, by nearly extinguishing the order of curates, unless the revenues of the church should grow with the population, and be greatly increased in many thinly-peopled districts, especially among the parishes of the North.

The order of curates is so beneficial, that some particular notice of it seems to be required in this place. For a church poor as, relatively to the numbers of people, that of England is, and probably will continue to be, it is no small advantage to have youthful servants, who will work upon the wages of hope and expectation. Still more advantageous is it to have, by means of this order, young men scattered over the country, who being more detached from the temporal concerns of the benefice, have more leisure for improvement and study, and are less subject to be brought into secular collision with those who are under their spiritual guardianship. The curate, if he reside at a distance from the incumbent, undertakes the requisite responsibilities of a temporal kind, in that modified way which prevents him, as a new-comer, from being charged with selfishness: while it prepares him for entering upon a benefice of his own with something of a suitable experience. If he should act under and in co-operation with a resident incumbent, the gain is mutual. His studies will probably be assisted; and his training, managed by a superior, will not be liable to relapse in matters of prudence, seemliness, or in any of the highest cares of his functions; and by way of return for these benefits to the pupil, it will often happen that the zeal of a middle-aged or declining incumbent will be revived, by being in near communion with the ardour of youth, when his own efforts may have languished through a melancholy consciousness that they have not produced as much good among his flock as, when he first entered upon the charge, he fondly hoped.

Let one remark, and that not the least important, he added. A curate, entering for the first time upon his office, comes from college after a course of expense, and with such inexperience in the use of money that in his new situation he is apt to fall unawares into pecuniary difficulties. If this happens to him, much more likely is it to happen to the youthful incumbent, whose relations, to his parishioners and to society, are more complicated; and, his income being larger and independent of another, a costlier style of living is required of him by public opinion. If embarrassment should ensue, and with that unavoidably some loss of respectability, his future usefulness will be proportionably impaired: not so with the curate, for he can easily remove and start afresh with a stock of experience and an unblemished reputation; whereas the early indiscretions of an incumbent being rarely forgotten, may be impediments to the efficacy of his ministry for the remainder of his life. The same observations would apply with equal force to doctrine. A young minister is liable to errors, from his notions being either too lax or overstrained. In both cases it would prove injurious that the error should be remembered, after study and reflection, with advancing years, shall have brought him to a clearer discernment of the truth, and better judgment in the application of it.

It must be acknowledged that, among the regulations of ecclesiastical polity, none at first view are more attractive than that which prescribes for every parish a resident incumbent. How agreeable to picture to one's self, as has been done by poets and romance-writers, from Chaucer down to Goldsmith, a man devoted to his ministerial office, with not a wish or a thought ranging beyond the circuit of its cares! Nor is it in poetry and fiction only that such characters are found; they are scattered, it is hoped not sparingly, over real life, especially in sequestered and rural districts, where there is but small influx of new inhabitants, and little change of occupation. The spirit of the Gospel, unaided by acquisitions of profane learning and experience in the world,—that spirit and the obligations of the sacred office may, in such situations, suffice to effect most of what is needful. But for the complex state of society that prevails in England much more is required, both in large towns and in many extensive districts of the country. A minister there should not only be irreproachable in manners and morals, but accomplished in learning, as far as is possible without sacrifice of the least of his pastoral duties. As necessary, perhaps more so, is it that he should be a citizen as well as a scholar; thoroughly acquainted with the structure of society and the constitution of civil government, and able to reason upon both with the most expert; all ultimately in order to support the truths of Christianity and to diffuse its blessings.

A young man coming fresh from the place of his education cannot have brought with him these accomplishments; and if the scheme of equalising church incomes, which many advisers are much bent upon, be realised, so that there should be little or no secular inducement for a clergyman to desire a removal from the spot where he may chance to have been first set down; surely not only opportunities for obtaining the requisite qualifications would be diminished, but the motives for desiring to obtain them would be proportionably weakened. And yet these qualifications are indispensable for the diffusion of that knowledge by which alone the political philosophy of the New Testament can be rightly expounded, and its precepts adequately enforced. In these times, when the press is daily exercising so great a power over the minds of the people, for wrong or for right as may happen, *that* preacher ranks among the first of benefactors who, without stooping to the direct treatment of current politics and passing events, can furnish infallible guidance through the delusions that surround them; and who, appealing to the sanctions of Scripture, may place the grounds of its injunctions in so clear a light that disaffection shall cease to be cultivated as a laudable propensity, and loyalty cleansed from the dishonour of a blind and prostrate obedience.

It is not, however, in regard to civic duties alone, that this knowledge in a minister of the Gospel is important; it is still more so for softening and subduing private and personal discontents. In all places, and at all times, men have gratuitously troubled themselves, because their survey of the dispensations of Providence has been partial and narrow; but now that readers are so greatly multiplied, men judge as they are *taught*, and repinings are engendered everywhere, by imputations being cast upon the government; and are prolonged or aggravated by being ascribed to misconduct or injustice in rulers, when the individual himself only is in fault. If a Christian pastor be competent to deal with these humours, as they may be dealt with, and by no members of society so successfully, both from more frequent and more favourable opportunities of intercourse, and by aid of the authority with which he speaks; he will be a teacher of moderation, a dispenser of the wisdom that blunts approaching distress by submission to God's will, and lightens, by patience, grievances which cannot be removed.

We live in times when nothing, of public good at least, is generally acceptable, but what we believe can be traced to preconceived intention and specific acts and formal contrivances of human understanding. A Christian instructor thoroughly accomplished would be a standing restraint upon such presumptuousness of judgment, by impressing the truth that

"In the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser spirit is at work for us,
A better eye than ours." *MS.*

Revelation points to the purity and peace of a future world; but our sphere of duty is upon earth; and the relations of impure and conflicting things to each other must be understood, or we shall be perpetually going wrong, in all but goodness of intention; and goodness of intention will itself relax through frequent disappointment. How desirable, then, is it, that a minister of the Gospel should be versed in the knowledge of existing facts, and be accustomed to a wide range of social experience! Nor is it less desirable for the purpose of counterbalancing and tempering in his own mind that ambition with which spiritual power is as apt to be tainted as any other species of power which men covet or possess.

It must be obvious that the scope of the argument is to discourage an attempt which would introduce into the Church of England an equality of income and station, upon the model of that of Scotland. The sounder part of the Scottish nation know what good their ancestors derived from their church, and feel how deeply the living generation is indebted to it. They respect and love it, as accommodated in so great a measure to a comparatively poor country, through the far greater portion of which prevails a uniformity of employment; but the acknowledged deficiency of theological learning among the clergy of that church is easily accounted for by this very equality. What else may be wanting there it would be unpleasant to inquire, and might prove invidious to determine: one thing, however, is clear; that in all countries the temporalities of the Church Establishment should bear an analogy to the state of society, otherwise it cannot diffuse its influence through the whole community. In a country so rich and luxurious as England, the character of its clergy must unavoidably sink, and their influence be everywhere impaired, if individuals from the upper ranks, and men of leading talents, are to have no inducements to enter into that body but such as are purely spiritual. And this "tinge of secularity" is no reproach to the clergy, nor does it imply a deficiency of spiritual endowments. Parents and guardians, looking forward to sources of honourable maintenance for their children and wards, often direct their thoughts early towards the church, being determined partly by outward circumstances, and partly by indications of seriousness or intellectual fitness. It is natural that a boy or youth, with such a prospect before him, should turn his attention to those studies, and be led into those habits of reflection, which will in some degree tend to prepare him for the duties he is hereafter to undertake. As he draws nearer to the time when he will be called to these duties, he is both led and compelled to examine the Scriptures. He becomes more and more sensible of their truth. Devotion grows in him; and what might begin in temporal considerations, will end (as in a majority of instances we trust it does) in a spiritual-mindedness not unworthy of that Gospel, the lessons of which he is to teach, and the faith of which he is to inculcate. Not inappositely may be here repeated an observation which, from its obviousness and importance, must have been frequently made, viz. that the impoverishing of the clergy, and bringing their incomes much nearer to a level, would not cause them to become less worldly-minded: the emoluments, howsoever reduced, would be as eagerly sought for, but by men from lower classes in society; men who, by their manners, habits, abilities, and the scanty measure of their attainments, would unavoidably be less fitted for their station, and less competent to discharge its duties.

Visionary notions have in all ages been afloat upon the subject of best providing for the clergy; notions which have been sincerely entertained by good men, with a view to the improvement of that order, and eagerly caught at and dwelt upon by the designing, for its degradation and disparagement. Some are beguiled by what they call the *voluntary system*, not seeing (what stares one in the face at the very threshold) that they who stand in most need of religious instruction are unconscious of the want, and therefore cannot reasonably be expected to make any sacrifices in order to supply it. Will the licentious, the sensual, and the depraved, take from the means of their gratifications and pursuits, to support a discipline that cannot advance without uprooting the trees that bear the fruit which they devour so greedily? Will *they* pay the price of that seed whose harvest is to be reaped in an invisible world? A voluntary system for the religious exigencies of a people numerous and circumstanced as we are! Not more absurd would it be to expect that a knot of boys should draw upon the pittance of their pocket-money to build schools, or out of the abundance of their discretion be able to select fit masters to teach and keep them in order! Some, who clearly perceive the incompetence and folly of such a scheme for the agricultural part of the people, nevertheless think it feasible in large towns, where the rich might subscribe for the religious instruction of the poor. Alas! they know little of the thick darkness that spreads over the streets and alleys of our large towns. The parish of Lambeth, a few years since, contained not more than one church and three or four small proprietary chapels; while dissenting chapels of every denomination were still more scantily found there; yet the inhabitants of the parish amounted at that time to upwards of 50,000. Were the parish church and the chapels of the Establishment existing there an *impediment* to the spread of the Gospel among that mass of people? Who shall dare to say so? But if any one, in the face of the fact which has just been stated, and in opposition to authentic reports to the same effect from various other quarters, should still contend that a voluntary system is sufficient for the spread and maintenance of religion, we would ask, what kind of religion? wherein would it differ, among the many, from deplorable fanaticism?

For the preservation of the Church Establishment, all men, whether they belong to it or not, could they perceive their true interest, would be strenuous; but how inadequate are its provisions for the needs of the country! and how much is it to be regretted that, while its zealous friends yield to alarms on account of the hostility of dissent, they should so much overrate the danger to be apprehended from that quarter, and almost overlook the fact that hundreds of thousands of our fellow-countrymen, though formally and nominally of the Church of England, never enter her places of worship, neither have they communication with her ministers! This deplorable state of things was partly produced by a decay of zeal among the rich and influential, and partly by a want of due expansive power in the constitution of the Establishment as regulated by law. Private benefactors, in their efforts to build and endow churches, have been frustrated or too much impeded by legal obstacles; these, where they are unreasonable or unfitted for the times, ought to be removed; and, keeping clear of intolerance and injustice, means should be used to render the presence and powers of the church commensurate with the wants of a shifting and still-increasing population.

This cannot be effected, unless the English Government vindicate the truth that, as her church exists for the benefit of all (though not in equal degree), whether of her communion or not, all should be made to contribute to its support. If this ground be abandoned, cause will be given to fear that a moral wound may be inflicted upon the heart of the English people, for which a remedy cannot be speedily provided by the utmost efforts which the members of the Church will themselves be able to make.

But let the friends of the church be of good courage. Powers are at work, by which, under Divine Providence, she may be strengthened and the sphere of her usefulness extended; not by alterations in her Liturgy, accommodated to this or that demand of finical taste, nor by cutting off this or that from her articles or Canons, to which the scrupulous or the overweening may object. Covert schism, and open nonconformity, would survive after alterations, however promising in the eyes of those whose subtilty had been exercised in making them. Latitudinarianism is the parhelion of liberty of conscience, and will ever successfully lay claim to a divided worship. Among Presbyterians, Socinians, Baptists, and Independents, there will always be found numbers who will tire of their several creeds, and some will come over to the Church. Conventicles may disappear, congregations in each denomination may fall into decay or be broken up, but the conquests which the National Church ought chiefly to aim at, lie among the thousands and tens of thousands of the unhappy outcasts who grow up with no religion at all. The wants of these cannot but be feelingly remembered. Whatever may be the disposition of the new constituencies under the reformed parliament, and the course which the men of their choice may be inclined or compelled to follow, it may be confidently hoped that individuals, acting in their private capacities, will endeavour to make up for the deficiencies of the legislature. Is it too much to expect that proprietors of large estates, where the inhabitants are without religious instruction, or where it is sparingly supplied, will deem it their duty to take part in this good work; and that thriving manufacturers and merchants will, in their several neighbourhoods, be sensible of the like obligation, and act upon it with generous rivalry?

Moreover, the force of public opinion is rapidly increasing, and some may bend to it, who are not so happy as to be swayed by a higher motive; especially they who derive large incomes from lay-impropriations in tracts of country where ministers are few and meagrely provided for. A claim still stronger may be acknowledged by those who, round their superb habitations, or elsewhere, walk over vast estates which were lavished upon their ancestors by royal favouritism or purchased at insignificant prices after church-spoliation; such proprietors, though not conscience-stricken (there is no call for that), may be prompted to make a return for which their tenantry and dependents will learn to bless their names. An impulse has been given; an accession of means from these several sources, co-operating with a *well*-considered change in the distribution of some parts of the property at present possessed by the church, a change scrupulously founded upon due respect to law and justice, will, we trust, bring about so much of what her friends desire, that the rest may be calmly waited for, with thankfulness for what shall have been obtained.

Let it not be thought unbecoming in a layman to have treated at length a subject with which the clergy are more intimately conversant. All may, without impropriety, speak of what deeply concerns all; nor need an apology be offered for going over ground which has been trod before so ably and so often: without pretending, however, to anything of novelty, either in matter or manner, something may have been offered to view which will save the writer from the imputation of having little to recommend his labour but goodness of intention.

It was with reference to thoughts and feelings expressed in verse, that I entered upon the above notices, and with verse I will conclude. The passage is extracted from my MSS. written above thirty years ago: it turns upon the individual dignity which humbleness of social condition does not preclude, but frequently promotes. It has no direct bearing upon clubs for the discussion of public affairs, nor upon political or trade-unions; but if a single workman—who, being a member of one of those clubs, runs the risk of becoming an agitator, or who, being enrolled in a union, must be left without a will of his own, and therefore a slave—should read these lines, and be touched by them, I should indeed rejoice, and little would I care for losing credit as a poet with intemperate critics, who think differently from me upon political philosophy or public measures, if the sober-minded admit that, in general views, my affections have been moved, and my imagination exercised, under and *for* the guidance of reason.

"Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
To Nature, and the power of human minds;
To men as they are men within themselves.
How oft high service is performed within,
When all the external man is rude in show;
Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
But a mere mountain chapel that protects
Its simple worshippers from sun and shower!
Of these, said I, shall be my song; of these,'
If future years mature me for the task,
Will I record the praises, making verse
Deal boldly with substantial things—in truth
And sanctity of passion, speak of these,
That justice may be done, obeisance paid
Where it is due. Thus haply shall I teach,
Inspire, through unadulterated ears
Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope; my theme
No other than the very heart of man,
As found among the best of those who live,
Not unexalted by religious faith,
Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few,
In Nature's presence: thence may I select
Sorrow that is not sorrow, but delight,
And miserable love that is not pain
To hear of, for the glory that redounds
Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.
Be mine to follow with no timid step
Where knowledge leads me; it shall be my pride
That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
Speaking no dream, but things oracular,
Matter not lightly to be heard by those
Who to the letter of the outward promise
Do read the invisible soul; by men adroit
In speech, and for communion with the world
Accomplished, minds whose faculties are then
Most active when they are most eloquent,
And elevated most when most admired.
Men may be found of other mould than these;
Who are their own upholders, to themselves
Encouragement and energy, and will;
Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
As native passion dictates. Others, too,
There are, among the walks of homely life,
Still higher, men for contemplation framed;
Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase;
Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse.
Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
The thought, the image, and the silent joy:
Words are but under-agents in their souls;
When they are grasping with their greatest strength
They do not breathe among them; this I speak
In gratitude to God, who feeds our hearts
For his own service, knoweth, loveth us,
When we are unregarded by the world."

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORDSWORTH:

Compiled by E. E. Reynolds, Editor of *The Prelude*, and *The Excursion*, in the Golden Treasury Series.

The only complete Bibliography of Wordsworth's writings is that compiled by Mr. T. J. Wise, and privately published in a limited edition in 1916. His "Two Lake Poets," also privately published (1927), contains bibliographies of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

The present select bibliography is arranged under the following headings :—

I. All editions (other than Selections) published during Wordsworth's lifetime.
II. Posthumous original editions.
III. Chief collected editions published since 1850.
IV. Chief editions of Selections and separate works published since 1850.
V. Contemporary estimates.
VI. A selection of biographies and criticisms published since 1850.

I. *All Editions (other than Selections) published during Wordsworth's Lifetime.*

1

An / Evening Walk. / An Epistle ; / In Verse. / Addressed to a Young Lady, / from the Lakes / of the / North of England. / By / William Wordsworth, B.A. / of St. John's, Cambridge.

London : / printed for J. Johnson, St. Paul's Churchyard. / 1793. /

4to, pp. vi + 27.

(Not reprinted in full during Wordsworth's lifetime. Original text given in Oxford and Globe Editions.)

2

Descriptive Sketches. / In Verse. / Taken during a / Pedestrian Tour / in the / Italian, Grison, Swiss, and Savoyard Alps. / By / W. Wordsworth, B.A. / of St. John's Cambridge. / -*Loca pastorum deserta atque otia dia.* / Lucret. / *Castella in tumulis-* / *-Et longe saltus lateque vacantes.* Virgil. /

London : / printed for J. Johnson, St. Paul's Churchyard. / 1793. /

4to, pp. iv + 55.

Dedicated "To the Rev. Robert Jones, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge."

(Not reprinted in full during Wordsworth's lifetime. Original text given in Oxford and Globe Editions.)

3

Lyrical Ballads, / with / a few other Poems. /

Bristol : / printed by Biggs and

Cottle, / for T. N. Longman, Paternoster-Row, London. / 1798. /

Fcp. 8vo, pp. v+210.

(This was the first issue of 500 copies. Cottle almost immediately sold the issue to J. & A. Arch, who provided the following title page:—

Lyrical Ballads / with / a few other Poems. /)

London: / printed for J. & A. Arch, Gracechurch Street. / 1798. /

Fcp. 8vo, v+210.

(Four poems were by S. T. Coleridge: "The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere," "The Foster-Mother's Tale," "The Nightingale, a Conversational Poem," and "The Dungeon." As "The Nightingale" was substituted for a shorter poem, "Lewti," after a few copies had been printed, the pagination after page 69 is not consecutive. Other alterations were made while the book was in the press, so that there are several variations in the copies still in existence.)

4

Lyrical Ballads/with/other Poems./ In Two Volumes. / By W. Wordsworth. / *Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum!* / Vol I. / Second Edition. (Vol. II.)/

London: / printed for T. N. Longman and O. Rees, Paternoster-Row, / by Biggs and Co. Bristol. / 1800. /

Fcp. 8vo. Vol. I. pp. xlvi+210+v. Vol. II. pp. iv+227.

(Vol. I. contains the first form of Wordsworth's famous Preface. The poems are those of the 1798 volume with the addition of one, "Love," by Coleridge. Vol. II. contains poems printed for the first time, and is therefore a first edition.

There are two separate issues of Vol. II. Fifteen lines of "Michael" had been omitted from page 210. To rectify this, two leaves (pp. 209-212) were cancelled, and three fresh leaves inserted numbered 209-210, *209-*210, 211-212.)

5

Lyrical Ballads, / with / Pastoral / and other Poems. / In two volumes. / By W. Wordsworth. / *Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum!* / Vol. I. Third Edition. (Vol. II. Second Edition.) /

London: / printed for T. N. Longman & O. Rees, Paternoster-Row, / by Biggs and Cottle, Crane-court, Fleet-street. / 1802. /

Fcp. 8vo. Vol. I, pp. vi+lxiv+200+iv. Vol. II. pp. iv+250.

(Practically a reproduction of the 1800 volumes. The Preface has important additions to that of 1800.)

Reprinted in America in one volume in 1802.

6

Lyrical Ballads, / with / Pastoral / and other Poems. / In two volumes. / By W. Wordsworth. / *Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum!* / Vol. I. Fourth Edition. (Vol. II. Fourth Edition.) /

London: / printed for Longmans, Hurst, Rees, & Orme, / by R. Taylor & Co., 38 Shoe Lane. / 1805. /

12mo. Vol. I. pp. iv+lxvi+200+iv. Vol. II. pp. iv+248.

(Reprint of 1802 edition with slight variations in text.)

7

Poems / in Two Volumes, / by / William Wordsworth, / Author of / the Lyrical Ballads. / *Posterius graviore sono tibi Musa loquetur / Nostra: dabunt cum securos mihi tempora fructus.* / Vol. I. (Vol. II.) /

London: / printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, / Paternoster-Row. / 1807./

12mo. Vol. I. pp. viii+158. Vol. II. pp. viii+170.

(It was this volume which first drew the fire of Francis Jeffrey in *The Edinburgh Review*.)

8

Concerning / the relations / of Great Britain, / Spain, and Portugal, / to each other, and to the Common Enemy, / at this Crisis; and specifically as affected by the / Convention of Cintra: / The whole brought to the test of those

Principles, by which / alone the Independence and Freedom of Nations / can be Preserved or Recovered. / Qui didicit patriae quid debeat ;— / Quod sit conscripti, quod judicis officium ; quae / Partes in bellum missi ducis. / By William Wordsworth. /

London : / printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, / Paternoster-Row. / 1809. /

Demy 8vo, pp. ii + 216 + i.

(Before this was put into circulation Wordsworth modified a statement on page 97 and substituted the following simpler form of title :—

Concerning / the / Convention of Cintra / in relation to / the Principles by which the Independence of / Nations must be Preserved or Recovered. /)

9

The Excursion, / being / a portion of / the Recluse, / a Poem. / By / William Wordsworth. /

London : / printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, / Paternoster-Row. / 1814. /

4to, pp. xxii + 447.

10

Poems / by William Wordsworth : / Including / Lyrical Ballads, / and the / Miscellaneous Pieces of the Author. / With Additional Poems. / A new Preface, and a supplementary Essay. / In two volumes. / Vol. I. (Vol. II.) /

London : / printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, and Brown, / Paternoster-Row. / 1815. /

Demy 8vo. Vol. I. pp. lii + 375. Vol. II. pp. ii + 400.

(Dedicated "To Sir George Howland Beaumont, Bart."

It was in this edition that Wordsworth first used the system of classification peculiar to him, "Poems founded on the Affections," "Poems of the Fancy," etc.

In 1820 a third volume was added to this edition entitled :—

Poems / by / William Wordsworth : / Including / The River Duddon ; / Vaudracour and Julia ; / Peter Bell ; The Waggoner ; / A Thanksgiving Ode ; / and / Miscellaneous Pieces. / Vol. III. /)

London : / printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, / Paternoster-Row. / 1820. /

(This was made up of the sheets of "Thanksgiving Ode," 1816 ; "Peter Bell," 1819 ; "The Waggoner," 1819 ; and "The River Duddon," 1820.)

11

The / White / Doe / of / Rylestone ; / or / The Fate of / the Nortons. / A Poem. / By / William Wordsworth. /

London : / printed for / Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, / Paternoster-Row, / by James Ballantyne and Co., Edinburgh. / 1815. /

4to, pp. xii + 162.

12

A / Letter / to / a Friend of Robert Burns : / Occasioned by / an intended republication / of / the account of the Life of Burns, / by Dr. Currie ; / and / of the selection made by Him from / His Letters. / By William Wordsworth. /

London : / printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, / Paternoster-Row. 1816. /

Demy 8vo, pp. iv + 37.

13

Thanksgiving Ode, / January 18, 1816. / With other short pieces, / chiefly referring to recent Public Events. / By William Wordsworth. /

London : / printed by Thomas Davison, Whitefriars ; / for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown. / Paternoster-Row. / 1816. /

Demy 8vo, pp. xii + 52.

14

Two / Addresses / to the / Freeholders / of / Westmoreland. /

Kendal : / printed by Airey and Bellingham. / 1818. /

Demy 8vo, pp. ii + 74 + iv.

15

Peter Bell, / a / tale in Verse / by / William Wordsworth. /

London : / printed by Strahan and Spottiswoode, Printers Street ; / for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, / Paternoster-Row. / 1819.

Demy 8vo, pp. viii + 88.

(Dedicated "To Robert Southey, Esq., P. L.")

16

The / Waggoner, / a Poem, / to which are added, / Sonnets. / By William Wordsworth. / "*What's in a Name?*" / —— —"*Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Caesar.*" /

London : / printed by Strahan & Spottiswoode, Printers Street ; / for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, / Paternoster-Row, 1819. /

Demy 8vo, pp. iv + 68.

(Dedicated to Charles Lamb, who wrote in acknowledgment, "The Waggoner is very ill put up in boards, at least it seems to me always to open at the dedication.")

17

Peter Bell. etc., as Item 15. Second Edition. 1819.

(Only the first and second editions contained the lines which appealed so much to Charles Lamb. (See "Life" by Lucas, p. 410.)

"Is it a party in a parlour? . . . .
All silent and all damn'd.")

18

The / River Duddon, / a series of Sonnets : / Vaudracour and Julia : / and other Poems. / To which is annexed, / a Topographical Description / of the / Country of the Lakes, / in the North of England. / By William Wordsworth. /

London : / printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, / Paternoster-Row, / 1820. /

Demy 8vo, pp. viii + 321.

(Dedicated "To the Rev. Christopher Wordsworth, D.D."

The "Topographical Description" was a revised form of an anonymous introduction Wordsworth had contributed to the Rev. John Wilkinson's "Select Views in Cumberland, etc." Published in 1810. See 23 below.)

19

The / Miscellaneous / Poems / of / William Wordsworth. / In four volumes. / Vol. I. (etc.) /

London : / printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster-Row. / 1820. /

Fcp. 8vo. Vol. I. pp. xlvii + 317 ; Vol. II. pp. vii + 347 ; Vol. III. pp. xi + 338 ; Vol. IV. pp. viii + 331.

(See 10 above.)

20

The Excursion / being a portion of / the Recluse, / a Poem. / By / William Wordsworth. / Second Edition. /

London : / printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, / Paternoster-Row. / 1820. /

Demy 8vo, pp. xx + 452.

21

Memorials / of a / tour on the Continent, / 1820. / By William Wordsworth. /

London : / printed for / Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, / Paternoster-Row. / 1822. /

8vo, pp. viii + 103.

22

Ecclesiastical / Sketches / by / William Wordsworth. /

London : / printed for / Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster-Row. / 1822. /

Demy 8vo, pp. x + 123.

23

A / Description / of the / Scenery of the Lakes / in / the North of England. / Third Edition / (now first published separately), / with additions, / and illustrative remarks upon the / scenery of the Alps. / By William Wordsworth.

London : / printed for / Longman Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster-Row. 1822. /

12mo. pp. iv + 156. Map facing title page. (See 18 above.)

24

THE / POETICAL WORKS / OF / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. / IN FIVE VOLUMES. / VOL. I. (etc.) /
LONDON: / PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN, / PATERNOSTER-ROW. 1827. /

Fcp. 8vo. Vol. I. pp. xlvii + 354; Vol. II. pp. viii + 391; Vol. III. pp. xvi + 455; Vol. IV. pp. vii + 397; Vol. V. pp. xvii + 421.

(This edition was republished in one volume in Paris in 1828. Vol. V. containing "The Excursion" was also published separately.)

25

THE / POETICAL WORKS / OF / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. / A NEW EDITION. / IN FOUR VOLUMES. / VOL. I. (etc.) /
LONDON: / PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, & LONGMAN, / PATERNOSTER-ROW. / 1832. /

Fcp. 8vo. Vol. I. pp. xlvii + 343; Vol. II. pp. xv + 377; Vol. III. pp. xi + 358; Vol. IV. pp. viii + 357.

26

YARROW REVISITED, / AND / OTHER POEMS. / BY / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. / "*Poets . . . dwell on earth / To clothe whate'er the soul admires and loves / With language and with numbers.*" / Akenside. /
LONDON: / PRINTED FOR / LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN, / PATERNOSTER-ROW; AND / EDWARD MOXON, DOVER-STREET. / 1835. /

12mo, pp. xvi + 349.

27

A / GUIDE / THROUGH THE / DISTRICT OF THE LAKES / IN / THE NORTH OF ENGLAND, / WITH / A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENERY etc. / FOR THE USE OF / TOURISTS AND RESIDENTS. / FIFTH EDITION, / WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS. / BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. /
KENDAL: / PUBLISHED BY HUDSON AND NICHOLSON; / AND IN LONDON BY / LONGMAN, AND CO., MOXON, AND WHITTAKER AND CO., / 1835. /

12mo, pp. xxiv + 139. Map facing title-page.

(This was Wordsworth's final revision of the Guide.)

28

EPITAPH.

(Upon Charles Lamb. 1835.)

Crown 4to, pp. 4.

(Mr. T. J. Wise owns what is apparently a unique copy of this issue.)

29

YARROW REVISITED, etc. (As 26 above) SECOND EDITION. 1836.

Fcp. 8vo, pp. xii + 323.

30

THE EXCURSION. / A POEM. / BY / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. / A NEW EDITION. /
LONDON: EDWARD MOXON, DOVER-STREET. / MDCCCXXXVI. /

Fcp. 8vo, pp. xv. + 374.

31

ODE TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLES LAMB. (To the memory of a frail, good man.)

Crown 8vo, pp. 7.

(Privately printed, 1836.)

32

THE / POETICAL WORKS / OF / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. / A NEW EDITION. / IN SIX VOLUMES. / VOL. I. (etc.) /
LONDON: / EDWARD MOXON, DOVER-STREET, / MDCCCXXXVI - MDCCCXXXVII. /

Fcp. 8vo. Vol. I. pp. xlviii + 314; Vol. II. pp. viii + 351; Vol. III. pp. xii + 355; Vol. IV. pp. xi + 364; Vol. V. pp. xi + 412; Vol. VI. pp. xv + 374, containing "The Excursion."

(Volumes I. and II. are dated 1836; Volumes III.-VI. are dated 1837.)

33

THE / SONNETS / OF / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. / COLLECTED IN ONE VOLUME, / WITH / A FEW ADDITIONAL ONES, NOW FIRST PUBLISHED. /

London : / Edward Moxon, Dover Street. / MDCCCXXXVIII. /
Fcp. 8vo, pp. xii + 477.

34

Yarrow Revisited / and other Poems. / By / William Wordsworth. / (Woodcut, Cupid with a Harp.)
London : Edward Moxon, Dover Street. / MDCCCXXXIX. /
18mo, pp. xi + 249.

35

Poems / chiefly of early and late years ; / including / The Borderers, / a Tragedy. / By William Wordsworth. /
London : / Edward Moxon, Dover Street. / MDCCCXLII. /
Fcp. 8vo, pp. xii + 405.

(In this volume "The Borderers" was printed for the first time. This became Vol. VII. of the Collected Edition. See 32 above.)

36

Poems / on the / loss and re-building / St. Mary's Church, Cardiff. / By / William Wordsworth. /
James Montgomery. / Thomas William Booker. / John Dix. /
Cardiff : W. Bird. / 1842.
Fcp. 8vo, pp. 24.

37

Verses / composed at the request of Jane Wallas Penfold / by William Wordsworth, Esq. / Poet Laureate. /
Large 4to, pp. 4.

(1843. Mr. T. J. Wise possesses the only known copy.)

38

Grace Darling.

(Imprint on last page :—Printed at the Office of Charles Thurnam.) (Consists of 4 octavo pages. Privately printed in 1843.)

39

Kendal and Windermere / Railway. / Two Letters, / re-printed from The Morning Post. / Revised with additions. /
Kendal : printed by R. Branthwaite and Son.
12mo, pp. 23. (1845).

(A second issue had the imprint : London : / Whittaker & Co., Ave Maria Lane, and Edward Moxon, Dover Street, / R. Branthwaite and Son, Kendal / Price Four Pence. / (1845).)

40

The / Poems / of / William Words-worth, D.C.L., / Poet Laureate, etc., etc. / A New Edition.
London : / Edward Moxon, Dover Street. / MDCCCXLV. /
Royal 8vo, pp. xxiv + 619.

41

To / the Queen ; / Dedicatory Verses addressed / to Her Majesty with the Author's Poems / by / William Wordsworth, / Poet Laureate. /
Printed for the Author / by R. Branthwaite & Son. / Kendal, 1846.
Fcp. 8vo, pp. 7.

42

Ode / performed in the Senate-House, Cambridge, on the sixth of July, M.DCCC.XLVII. / at the first commencement / after / the installation of / His Royal Highness the Prince Albert, / Chancellor of the University. / (Arms of the University). /
Cambridge : / printed at the University Press. 1847.
Demy 4to, pp. 8.

43

Ode / on the Installation / of / Hi Royal Highness Prince Albert as / Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, / by Willian Wordsworth, / Poet Laureate. /
London : printed, by permission, b Vizetelly Brothers and Co. Published by George Bell, Flee Street. / (Price 3s. 6d.)
Crown 4to, pp. 8.

44

THE / POETICAL WORKS / OF / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, D.C.L. / POET LAUREATE, etc., etc. / IN SIX VOLUMES. / VOL. I. (etc.) / A NEW EDITION. /
LONDON: / EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET. / MDCCCXLIX.

16mo. Vol. I. pp. x + 299; Vol. II. pp. xii + 307; Vol. III. pp. xv + 271; Vol. IV. pp. xvi + 293; Vol. V. pp. viii. + 307; Vol. VI. pp. v + 301, containing "The Excursion."

(Volumes I. and II. are dated 1849; Volumes III.-VI., 1850. This was the last edition issued during the poet's lifetime, and provides a standard text.)

II. *Posthumous Original Editions*

45

THE PRELUDE, / OR / GROWTH OF A POET'S MIND; / AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEM; / BY / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. /
LONDON: / EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET. / 1850.

Demy 8vo, pp. x + 374.

46

THE PROSE WORKS / OF / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. / FOR THE FIRST TIME COLLECTED, / WITH ADDITIONS FROM UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS. / EDITED, WITH PREFACE, NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS, / BY THE / REV. ALEXANDER B. GROSART, / ST. GEORGE'S, BLACKBURN, LANCASHIRE. / IN THREE VOLUMES. / VOL. I. / POLITICAL AND ETHICAL. / (VOL. II. / ÆSTHETICAL AND LITERARY. / VOL. III. / CRITICAL AND ETHICAL. /)
LONDON: EDWARD MOXON, SON, AND CO. / 1 AMEN CORNER, PATERNOSTER ROW. / 1876. /
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Demy 8vo. Vol. I. pp. xxxviii + 360; Vol. II. pp. iv + 347; Vol. III. pp. xii + 516.

(The most important new material consists of "Apology for the French Revolution, 1793," "Of the Catholic Relief Bill, 1829," and the full text of the "Fenwick notes.")

47

THE RECLUSE / BY / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. /
LONDON / MACMILLAN AND CO. / AND NEW YORK. / 1888.

Fcp. 8vo. pp. vi + 56.

(This fragment of 900 lines is all that was completed of the first part of the trilogy "The Recluse," of which "The Excursion" was the second. No trace of the third part has been found. "The Prelude" was a separate but introductory poem.)

48

POEMS AND EXTRACTS / CHOSEN BY / WILLIAM WORDSWORTH / FOR AN ALBUM / PRESENTED TO LADY MARY LOWTHER / CHRISTMAS, 1819 / PRINTED LITERALLY FROM THE ORIGINAL ALBUM / WITH FACSIMILES. /
LONDON / HENRY FROWDE / 1905.

Cr. 8vo, pp. xv + 106.

49

LETTERS OF THE / WORDSWORTH FAMILY / FROM 1787 TO 1855 / COLLECTED AND EDITED BY WILLIAM KNIGHT / IN THREE VOLUMES / VOLUME I. (etc.) /
BOSTON AND LONDON / GINN AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS / 1907.

Cr. 8vo. Vol. I. pp. xxxiii + 542; Vol. II. pp. xxix + 509; Vol. III. pp. xxxi + 498.

50

WORDSWORTH AND REED / THE POET'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH / HIS AMERICAN EDITOR: 1836-1850 / AND HENRY REED'S ACCOUNT OF / HIS RECEPTION AT RYDAL MOUNT / LONDON AND ELSEWHERE IN 1854 / EDITED BY / LESLIE NATHAN BROUGHTON / *Professor of English in Cornell University* / [Arms] / ITHACA, NEW YORK / CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS. / LONDON: HUMPHREY MILFORD / OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS / 1933.

Cr. 8vo, pp. xviii + 288.

III. *Chief Collected Editions published since 1850*

The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth. With an Introduction by John (Viscount) Morley. Macmillan. (The Globe Edition.)

The Text and Notes are from the Edition of 1857 (Moxon's Edition, which gave the Fenwick note in front of the poem commented upon). The order of the poems is the chronological one suggested by William Knight; this is not always reliable, but is valuable as an aid to understanding Wordsworth's development.

Poems of William Wordsworth, edited by William Knight. Eight volumes. Macmillan. (The Eversley Edition.)

This is the fullest edition in print; the *Recluse* fragment is included under the title "Home at Grasmere." Very full variant readings are given.

The Poetical Works of Wordsworth. With Introduction and Notes. Edited by Thomas Hutchinson. Oxford.

Contains the 1849-50 text, and follows the order peculiar to Wordsworth. Fenwick notes not given, but many useful ones are taken from earlier Editions and some are added by the Editor.

The following editions are now out of print, but should be consulted by the student:

The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth. Edited with Memoir by Edward Dowden. Seven volumes. Bell. (The Aldine Edition.)

An excellent Edition in every way, though the *Recluse* fragment is not included.

The Poems of William Wordsworth. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Nowell Charles Smith. In three volumes. Methuen

Both the above Editions contain the 1849-50 text with full notes and variant readings.

IV. *Chief Editions of Selections and Separate Works published since 1850*

(i) SELECTIONS

There are innumerable Selections published especially for schools. The first of these was published in 1831 by Moxon, "for the use of schools and Young Persons."

One general volume, "Poems of Wordsworth, chosen and edited by Matthew Arnold," first published in the Golden Treasury Series in 1879, ranks as a classic partly on account of the important Preface.

One other volume may be mentioned, that in Nelson's Poets, edited by Sir Henry Newbolt, with an Introduction by Viscount Grey.

(ii) SEPARATE WORKS

Lyrical Ballads, 1798. (*a*) Edited by H. Littledale. Oxford Miscellany. A school edition with notes is also issued by the Clarendon Press. 1911.

(*b*) Edited with Introduction and Notes by George Sampson. Methuen. 1903.

Poems of 1807. Reprinted in type-facsimile, edited with Introduction and Notes by Helen Darbishire. Clarendon Press. 1914.

The Excursion with the fragment of *The Recluse.* Edited by E. E. Reynolds. The Golden Treasury Series. Macmillan. (In preparation.)

The Ecclesiastical Sonnets of William Wordsworth. A Critical Edition, by A. F. Potts. Yale University Press. 1922.

The Prelude. (*a*) Edited by G. S. Moore Smith, in Dent's Temple Classics. 1896.

(*b*) Edited from the Manuscripts with Introduction, Textual and Critical Notes, by Ernest de Selincourt. 1926.

This Edition is of the greatest importance to the student; the original text of 1805-6 is given on the left-hand pages with that of 1850 on the right-hand pages. The Introduction and Notes are most valuable as they throw a flood of light on the development of Wordsworth's thought and art.

(*c*) Edited by E. E. Reynolds. The Golden Treasury Series. Macmillan. 1932.

Literary Criticism. Edited with an Introduction by Nowell C. Smith. Oxford Miscellany. 1905.

In this one volume are included Wordsworth's important Prefaces, besides the Essays on Epitaphs and various letters of criticism.

The Convention of Cintra. With an Introduction by A. V. Dicey. Oxford Miscellany. 1915.

Guide to the Lakes. With an Introduction, Appendices, and Notes Textual and Illustrative by Ernest de Selincourt. Oxford Miscellany. 1926.

V. *Contemporary Estimates*

Occasional comment, etc., will be found in the Lives and Correspondence of such contemporaries as Coleridge, Lamb, Southey, Crabb Robinson, Benjamin Haydon, Leigh Hunt, etc.

A convenient anthology of criticism is provided by Miss Elsie Smith's *An Estimate of Wordsworth by his Contemporaries, 1793–1822.* Blackwell. 1932.

Memoirs of William Wordsworth, by Christopher Wordsworth. Moxon. 1851.

A much maligned book. The author did not attempt to do more than assemble material to illustrate the poems. A number of personal reminiscences by friends of the poet are also included.

Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth. Edited by William Knight. Macmillan.

Originally published in 1897 in two volumes. This delightful book gives many sidelights on the poems.

Biographia Literaria. By S. T. Coleridge.

The standard edition is that edited by J. Shawcross. 2 vols. Oxford. 1907. A more convenient edition for the general reader is that edited by Sir A. Quiller-Couch and George Sampson. Cambridge. 1920. The editors give the literary criticism only, and have added Wordsworth's prefaces and essays on poetry.

Table Talk and Omniana of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Oxford Standard Authors.

Reminiscences of the English Lake Poets. By Thomas De Quincey. Everyman's Library.

A vivid picture, but allowance must be made for the author's perversity.

The Spirit of the Age, and, *Lectures on the English Poets.* By William Hazlitt. Contained in one volume of Everyman's Library.

Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb, etc. Being Selections from the Remains of Henry Crabb Robinson. Edited by Edith Morley. Longman. 1922.

The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle, 1808–1866. Edited by Edith Morley. 2 vols. Oxford. 1927.

Reminiscences by Thomas Carlyle. Edited by C. E. Norton. Everyman's Library. 1932.

Pages 357 to 365 refer to Wordsworth.

Reminiscences of Wordsworth amongst the Peasantry of Westmoreland. By H. D. Rawnsley. In *Wordsworthiana*, Macmillan. 1889. o.p.

The third volume of Grosart (see 46 above) also contains some interesting personal recollections.

VI. *A Selection of Biographies and Criticisms published since 1850*

It is not possible here to do more than give a selection from the vast Wordsworth literature. A number of the books noted contain short bibliographies and references to other books.

The reader who approaches the study of Wordsworth for the first time may be advised, *after reading his poems*, to start with Herford's "Wordsworth," and then to go on to Harper's "Wordsworth," and to Selincourt's "Dorothy Wordsworth." These will lay a sound foundation of fact and balanced opinion.

It is a temptation to divide this list into two parts, taking 1916 as the dividing date. It was in that year that Professor Harper published the facts about Wordsworth and Annette Vallon as far as he had elucidated them. Naturally this important discovery led to a reassessment of Wordsworth's work, and there was the inevitable tendency to overestimate the importance of the fresh information. Some with considerable justice would consider the publication of Selincourt's Edition of "The Prelude" in 1926 as of greater significance than Wordsworth's French daughter. These two events—for such they are—in the history of Wordsworth literature, do not, however, invalidate previous criticism, and it would be a serious loss to regard, for instance, Raleigh's "Wordsworth" as out of date because that book was published in 1903.

The temptation has been resisted, and titles are given in alphabetical order of the authors' names. A few notes are added for the guidance of the reader.

Arnold, Mathew. *Essays in Criticism: Second Series.* 1888.

A reprint of the Introduction to the Golden Treasury Selection from Wordsworth. See also Arnold's poem *Memorial Verses.*

Bagehot, W. *Literary Studies.* 1879. Reprinted in Everyman's Library.

Batho, Edith C. *The Later Wordsworth.* 1933.

An interesting examination of Wordsworth's ideas in later life and their relation to his youthful beliefs. A valiant vindication.

Beatty, W. *William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art in their Historical Relations.* 1922.

Particularly useful in its study of Wordsworth's theories and practice as exemplified in some of the longer poems.

Bradley, A. C. *Oxford Lectures on Poetry.* 1905.

Bradley, A. C. *A Miscellany.* 1929.

Brandes, G. *Main Currents of Literature in the Nineteenth Century.* 1876. English translation, 1901.
A Danish Critic.

Brandl, A. *Coleridge and the English Romantic School.* 1888.
An Austrian critic.

Brooke, Stopford A. *Theology in the English Poets.* 1874.

Reprinted in Everyman's Library.

Cooper, Lane. *Concordance to the Poems of William Wordsworth.* 1911.

Dicey, A. V. *The Statesmanship of Wordsworth.* 1917.

Important as a study of Wordsworth's political ideas.

Dowden, E. *Studies in Literature.* 1878.

Dowden, E. *New Studies in Literature.* 1895.

Elton, O. *Wordsworth.* Reprinted from "Survey of English Literature, 1780–1830.

Garrod, H. W. *Wordsworth.* 1926. (Second and enlarged edition, 1927.)
An outstanding book of essays.

Harper, G. M. *William Wordsworth, His Life, Works, and Influence.* Two volumes. 1916. One volume edition, 1929.

This may be regarded as the standard life of Wordsworth. It should, however, be supplemented by Batho's "Later Wordsworth."

Harper, G. M. *Wordsworth's French Daughter.* 1921.

Herford, C. H. *The Age of Wordsworth.* 1897.

Herford, C. H. *Wordsworth.* 1930.

No better introductory volume could be found; it is a balanced piece of work.

Inge, W. R. *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought.* 1926.

Inge, W. R. *Studies of English Mystics.* 1906.

Dean Inge's references to Wordsworth are valuable.

Legouis, E. *La Jeunesse de Wordsworth.* Translated into English with the title, *The Early Life of William Wordsworth, 1770–1798.* 1897. Second Edition with an Appendix incorporating fresh information, 1921.

This study of "The Prelude" is a landmark in the appreciation of the poet.

LEGOUIS, E. *William Wordsworth and Annette Vallon.* 1922.

LEGOUIS, E. *Wordsworth.* Chapter V. in Volume XI. of The Cambridge History of English Literature.

LIBERTY, STEPHEN. *Religion in Wordsworth.* 1923.

LOWELL, J. R. *Among My Books.* 1870. Reprinted in Everyman's Library.

MACLEAN, C. M. *Dorothy and William Wordsworth.* 1927.

A book of essays.

MACLEAN, C. M. *Dorothy Wordsworth.* 1932.

A fanciful reconstruction of Dorothy Wordsworth's early life.

MILL, J. S. *Autobiography.* 1889.

Reprinted in the World's Classics. Mill found spiritual refreshment in Wordsworth's poetry after his stern education.

MYERS, F. W. H. *Wordsworth.* 1881.

English Men of Letters Series, and still amongst the most valuable studies of the poet.

PATER, W. *Appreciations.* 1889.

RALEIGH, SIR W. *Wordsworth.* 1903.

One of the finest appreciations written.

READ, HERBERT. *Wordsworth.* The Clark Lectures, 1929–30.

By a modern poet and art critic. Too much stress is put on the Annette episode, and the writer seems to be more interested in psychology than in poetry.

SELINCOURT, ERNEST DE. *Dorothy Wordsworth.* 1933.

Will probably hold its place as the standard life of Dorothy Wordsworth. "Alike by what she wrote and what she was, Dorothy Wordsworth illumined her brother's life and poetry."

STEPHEN, LESLIE. *Hours in a Library.* 1882. Vol. II.

Essay on "Wordsworth's Ethics."

STEPHEN, LESLIE. *Studies of a Biographer.* 1898. Vol. I.

Essay on "Wordsworth's Youth."

SUTHERLAND, JAMES. *The Medium of Poetry.* 1933.

A contrast between Wordsworth and Keats.

WHITE, W. HALE. *An Examination of the Charge of Apostasy against Wordsworth.* 1898.

WHITEHEAD, A. N. *Science and the Modern World.* 1927.

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THE END

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